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BE

WHAT WILL JAPAN DO?

What will Japan Do?

A Forecast

BY

J. MORRIS

AUTHOR OF

"ADVANCE, JAPAN!" "KOTAKA: A SAMURAI'S DAUGHTER,"
"WAR IN KOREA," ETC.

WITH A MAP OF THE FAR EAST

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PREFACE

When I ventured to depict, some eleven years ago, the inner life of the Japanese people, I did so with the conviction that in a general way our knowledge of them was limited and inaccurate. I sought to direct attention to the capabilities of a nation at large which has in more recent times justified its right to be regarded as a potential factor in all calculations concerning the political future of the Extreme Orient.

In my little work entitled *War in Korea*, I was sanguine enough to predict success for the armies of the Ten-Shi in the campaign against China on which they were then just entering. Still more recently I have been privileged to submit, under the title of *Advance, Japan!* an approximately up-to date account of the actual

progress made in that country under the present Emperor's rule. In treating of the existing condition of affairs in the Extreme Orient, I have been mindful of the prominent part which JAPAN is destined to play in regard to the Middle Kingdom, for the rise of one country is to all appearances to be followed in time by the fall of the other.

It needs no gift of prophecy to foresee that the Japanese Empire is certain to take a high place among the Powers of the East. And inasmuch as that elevation may in part be attained concurrently with radical changes in the Celestial Empire, and by means of the formidable army and navy in which the Mikado's subjects take such pride, the moment seems to be opportune for passing in review those more salient features of the Far Eastern question, in reference to which the action of Japan is just now of absorbing interest. The prime agent in the threatened deposition of the Manchu dynasty, however, is the perpetual and irresistible advance of Russia, and it is in this connection that I venture to predict a collision between the forces of the TEN-SHI and the TSAR, and by anticipating the nature

of the engagements on land and sea which follow, to convey to the reader an idea of the relative strength of the armaments possessed by the rivals for the nautical supremacy of Eastern waters. Great Britain is still unassailable, as queen of the seas, in the Far East, as elsewhere, but it is becoming more patent every year that the Japanese navy is assuming proportions which will shortly render it second to none in effective power, for one reason that it is always on the spot, ready for action, and does not depend upon sudden reinforcement in an emergency. Great Britain could crush Japan, it might be said, by bringing more of her vast forces to bear, but in respect of available power on land and sea, Japan must now be awarded the premier position in the Orient. And she is increasing both her military and maritime strength with extraordinary rapidity, by ordering warships not merely in one country, but in several countries, as well as building in all her own yards, and by manufacturing MURATA rifles and ammunition in her own factories.

Japan recognizes that her very existence as an independent nation hangs upon her ability

to stay the eastward march of the Colossus of the North, and at all hazards she will attempt it. Nothing can arrest Russia's southward progress in China, and probably Japan does not seek to do so. But for weighty reasons the kingdom of KOREA must in some form or other be preserved as a barrier between herself and Russia on the west. It is on this ground that I venture to prognosticate early disaster to the friendly relations now existing between the Governments of Tokio and St. Petersburg.

In great part the book is a forecast, therefore —a forecast founded on admitted facts and figures. My aim has been to furnish information in a readable form, and I trust it will be found fairly accurate.

J. M.

London, January 1898.

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WHAT WILL JAPAN DO?

A POLITICAL FORECAST

CHAPTER I

AN ANXIOUS MOMENT

A startling announcement in the Ministerial organ at Tokio—Peril in Korea—Russia arrogates to herself control—War in the air—The order given to mobilize—Japan's army and navy—Her opportunity.

On a certain eventful morning, at the close of the nineteenth century, the recognized official organ of the Japanese Ministry published an editorial on the subject of the position of the nation with regard to Russia, and the palpably imminent upheaval in the neighbouring Celestial Empire. It was couched in language which, from such a source, created

the utmost astonishment in the minds of all classes, but surprise quickly gave way to enthusiasm when it was realized that the article could scarcely be interpreted as other than conveying a pledge of the Government's determination to provoke a declaration of war from Russia, on account of the decisive steps taken by the Japanese admiral in Korea—steps which it was intended should be a challenge to the Russian advance in that quarter.

For upwards of two years it had only been by the exercise of consummate diplomacy that the Government had steered clear of the traps which had been set in its path, and it was felt that the countenance of Great Britain had on more than one occasion had a deterrent effect upon those Powers which affected to find in Japan's rapid advance an excuse for attributing to her a desire to disturb the balance of Asiatic peace. The Japanese people had been prone to take alarm at the evident disposition of Russia to acquire territory on the coasts adjacent to their own island empire, and were

only re-assured by the magnitude of the preparations which their ruler was making to resist encroachment upon the national rights in any shape. Of late the tide of Muscovite conquest had rolled over the extreme northern provinces of China, but now the peninsula of the Land of Morning Calm had become Russia's objective, and Korea was a land far too near the western frontier coast of Niphon to admit of a change of ownership without the Tokio authorities putting in a vigorous protest, so that, notwithstanding an unwillingness to be betrayed into a momentous struggle before the army and navy could be raised to full standard, the Mikado's Cabinet had given decided expression to its views.

In this resolve the Ministry had been fully sustained by the co-operation of all parties in the Diet, without distinction of political creed. The understanding with the St. Petersburg Government arrived at on the occasion of the visit of Marshal Yamagata to Russia in 1896 had been to jointly protect the Korean King's

dominions, and to maintain his rule at Seoul even at the expense of financing his administration. Only a few troops were to be kept at the Korean capital by each of the two Powers for the defence of its own legation, and practically neither Power was free to take any steps in the direction of limiting the Korean monarch's freedom of action, without the cognizance and assent of the other. Russia's representative, however, had arrogated to himself a right to control the finances of the country, to appoint one of his own nationality to the position of Chancellor of the Korean exchequer, and generally to take over the management of affairs in the name of the Tsar. Japan had either to submit to be finally and forcibly ousted from Korea, leaving the field for her wily and dangerous antagonist to step in, or to cast down her gauntlet—in effect, if not in so many words—to the Great Empire of Northern Europe and Asia. The pressure which Japan had sustained had not been altogether patiently borne by the bulk of the

population, and the Ministry had been driven to acknowledge that there is a limit, even in the case of law-abiding people like the Japanese, to the endurance of that which they may conceive to be an insult to the national pride. Thus when the fateful newspaper paragraphs appeared on that glorious spring morning, the streets of the capital quickly became animated with little knots of citizens eagerly discussing the situation. It was as though the safety-valve of the State mechanism had suddenly been blown out, and the pent-up wrath and bitterness knew no bounds. "Orosha" was the word on every lip, accompanied by such denunciations as a language singularly weak in expletives could supply. Classical scholars spoke of Ro-Koku, which was only another name for Russia, and prefixed to it a word in English which they deemed appropriate, but which has no precise equivalent in their own tongue. But there was a deeper feeling in the hearts of the masses, a desperate resolve to do or die, which augured well for the success of

any enterprise in which popular support could be desired by the Cabinet. It was a time when those professional agitators—the *soshi*—found their occupation gone, for it was palpably futile, at a moment of such enthusiasm, to attempt to stir up strife among a people so united in their approval of the foreign policy of the Government.

"War! war!" nothing but war was in the air. The nation had risen *en masse* at the mere sound of the trumpet. For the telegraph wires had flashed a *précis* of the article in the Tokio journal to all the country newspapers, and the recognition of the fact that the oracle had at last spoken—and spoken in unmistakable terms—was universal. Scores of the provincial papers sent back their congratulations accompanied by reports of the manner in which the news had been received in their midst, and by reiterated avowals of perfect confidence in the Cabinet.

The Russian Minister was visibly disquieted, and lost no time in acquainting his Govern-

ment, in the course of a long cypher telegram, which had to pass over the Japanese wires, of course, as far as Nagasaki, with the ominous turn which affairs had taken. The Japanese Minister of Communications, as an act of courtesy, sent down special directions to the staff of the central telegraph station to give precedence to the Russian despatch, and it was accordingly hurried along to the momentary detriment of all the other messages awaiting transmission.

"Let us be civil now, though presently we come to blows," was the suggestive remark of the head official as he gave instructions to the signaller.

Some days passed in comparative quietude, though there was always felt to be a prevailing undercurrent of popular fervour: the late wars had deepened the tendency to self-restraint among the people, and they bore the suspense with fortitude. But the preparations which continually went on at the arsenals, and at Yokosuka dockyard, were known to be on a

colossal and altogether unprecedented scale, for the Emperor paid an express visit to the depôt at the mouth of Tokio Bay, to see for himself how matters concerning the fleet of torpedo boats and other ships stationed there were shaping. His Majesty had smiled in a cheery way, as he stepped out of the saloon car on his return to the capital, and was greeted by thousands of his loyal subjects. He was overheard to remark to an admiral who met him at the carriage, "All is ready," and this was appropriated as a headline for authoritative declarations in the evening journals of the Japanese metropolis.

Among other things in which they had copied the arrangements of European Powers, it had long since been settled that on receipt of a telegram from head-quarters consisting of the single word—"PREPARE"—the whole of Japan's naval and military forces should be forthwith mobilized. The system on which Von Moltke prided himself had been most attentively studied, and it might even be said

assiduously copied, by the Japanese, and all was complete in the docks, arsenals, and naval yards throughout the empire, to "the last button on the gaiter" as it could have been declared with accuracy.

A fairly close calculation of the resources of the Japanese empire, offensive and defensive, at the end of the year 1897, is here appended, and it will be acknowledged that the nation was not without justification for the confidence which it exhibited in its strength by land and sea.

The Army, including Reserves.

Superior Officers	898
Officers	5,176
Non-commissioned Officers .	21,640
Rank and File	475,870
	503,584

Of these some eight per cent. were of the cavalry arm, seventeen per cent. artillery, five per cent. engineers, and the remaining seventy per cent. all infantry.

The NAVY.—Including vessels building in Japan, but not those being constructed in Europe.

Battle-ships	4
Cruisers	23
Gunboats	24
Torpedo destroyers	7
Torpedo boats	57
	115

Practically the whole of these were modern ships, those built prior to 1879 not having been included. The greater number dated from about 1886, but the most formidable had been built in Great Britain within the past five years.

Arrangements had been made to increase the total strength of the navy to 200,000 tons. The entire programme would have extended over several years,—into the coming century, in fact.

At length the eventful day arrived when the gage of battle was actually thrown down by

Russia, and instantly taken up by the Government of Tokio.

Truth to tell, this was the supreme moment of their existence to the people of Dai Niphon. A war with a Power like China, though its subjects might be as the sands of the sea-shore in numbers, could not be regarded in the light of an encounter calculated to bestow, however triumphant the issue, that illustrious fame upon the Japanese arms which the nation coveted. The Chinese war was one which the Ministry of the day had been compelled to undertake, in great measure, with the aim of preserving peace at home, and to repel a charge of pusillanimity freely levelled at them by political adversaries. Had the Cabinet been content much longer to bear with the supercilious behaviour of the Celestials it would have incurred the scorn of its own supporters. But the war in which the nation had now to engage was one eminently fitted not only to test its resources to the uttermost, but in the event of

success to confer upon it the distinction of a first-class Power. Japan's opportunity had come to prove to the world that in the ranks of her armies and on the decks of her warships would be found foemen worthy of any nation's steel.

CHAPTER II

JAPAN HAD MADE READY

Preparations already made—New vessels built at Nagasaki—Continued progress imperative—Coast defences—Forts at Shimonoseki—Extension of railways—Financial problems—The Russian Minister delivers his message—The Mikado telegraphs "Prepare"—Russia's objective—Formosa imperilled—Port Hamilton threatened.

BUT prior to entering upon a *résumé* of the incidents of that eventful struggle, it may be worth while to pass in review the methods by which Japan, well knowing what she had to expect, endeavoured to arm herself for the desperate fight.

As far as education could go, her men were all well prepared. They had revelled in the study of tactics, naval and military, until

"kriegspiel" had no longer an interest for them. They were only too anxious—the young men—to come to close quarters with their traditional enemy. Russia's sins were too many and too heinous, in the eyes of the Japanese, to be forgiven. First, there was the little affair of Saghalien, in the negotiations regarding which it was felt that the representatives of the Tsar had stolen a march upon the unsuspecting Admiral Yenomoto. For the southern half of a valuable island, to which the Japanese held that they possessed a claim, the origin of which was lost in antiquity, they received a mess of pottage in the shape of half-a-dozen absolutely worthless islets forming the northern section of the Kurile group. They realized that they had been out-manœuvred. Following this there had been the unwarrantable interference, backed up by France and Germany, of the Russian Government in the settlement of Liao-tung province—territory which, rightly or wrongly, had been regarded by the Mikado's troops as their legitimate

spoil. Russia's next offence had been committed in Korea, where she had sought by every means at her disposal, now by threats, now by diplomacy, to oust the Japanese from the position of influence to which they had climbed. It was not very surprising, then, that the general tone prevailing in the camps of the Mikado's soldiers was one of intense hatred to all things Russian.

With what thoroughness the Japanese entered into the task which they had set themselves —or rather, that to which they conceived that they stood committed by the results of the war of 1894-5 with China—may be gathered from the nature of the work which the dockyard at Nagasaki, a private venture of the Mitsu Bishi Company, was turning out. Three large steamers, respectively of 5,800, 2,500, and 1,600 tons, besides a number of smaller craft, were in process of construction simultaneously; nine steamers were on the slips, undergoing repair, and thirty other vessels were awaiting their turn to go into dock. In six months

there were no fewer than 188 Japanese-owned or foreign-owned vessels overhauled at this place, by a staff consisting of thirty foreign experts and business managers, eighty-seven writers, and over 3,600 mechanics.

It was recognized by the leading spirits in the Land of the Rising Sun that one of the effects of the war with China had been to make it impossible for their country to stand still. Continued progress had become imperative. And the duty of the State, it was declared, was to secure the extension of commerce, as the means to an end, by every measure that could reasonably be expected to contribute to that result. The construction of roads and railways, of harbours and docks, and the provision of lines of steamers trading to foreign lands, were all urged upon the Ministry with a vehemence which brooked no delay, and the Government was not slow to further with its countenance, if not to actively support, every scheme that had in it the elements of ultimate success.

The defence of the coast, also, had demanded and received the closest attention, a liberal appropriation being made for the erection of forts on all those exposed points which it was considered might be chosen by an enemy for attack. One of these was Moji, in the Straits of Shimonoseki—a great coaling station—and as such a place of immense importance to defenders and possible assailants alike. The Hayadomoye promontory, at this port, is armed with six 25-centimetre guns, capable of piercing sixteen inches of armour. Practically it would be impossible for a vessel to force a passage through the narrow channel, here only 600 yards wide, in the face of a fire from this formidable fort. The entire coast of Kiushiu, Niphon, and Yeso had been strengthened at all salient points, and owing to the rugged front which the northern and western sea-board presents at all times, it would be a matter of no little difficulty to effect a landing at any spot which was not already commanded by the guns of some fortification.

What was perhaps of not less importance, the railway system of the empire was being rapidly extended to various exceptionally valuable strategical positions on the west, in as close an approximation to the plan of coast defence which had been followed in Europe, as the mountainous character of the Japanese islands would permit. Thus it was possible to concentrate such a defensive force at very short notice on any given spot on the rock-bound frontier which faces Korea and the shores of Russian Asia as would suffice to ward off a threatened blow, a fact of which the agents of the Tsar had, doubtless, made themselves fully acquainted.

The trend of publicly expressed opinion had always confirmed the Government in its resolve to maintain what had hitherto been described in Tokio as a strong foreign policy. In other words the independence and integrity of the empire had to be preserved at all hazards. Ofttimes this pronouncement was, in Western countries, taken to be mere bravado, but in reality it proceeded from a strong national con-

viction that there must be no sign of wavering, lest, as in cases which had come within their ken, Dai Niphon should suffer extinction by the simple process of absorption into a larger field. There had ever been too much true patriotism among the people of the Japanese islands for the permanent lodgment of a foe upon the surface of their soil. It was the nation's proud reflection that no enemy had yet been able to attain a footing in the land of Yamato.

At this time it was very noticeable, too, that however great may have been the extent to which the masses had been intoxicated with delight at the successful issue of the contest with China, those in authority by no means lost sight of the paramount necessity of pursuing a line of policy which should have for its main object the financial security of the country. They set their faces rigidly against any form of extravagance. They acknowledged that the newly-acquired possessions of Formosa and the Pescadores Islands would prove to be

not sources of income but channels through which a constant drain of expenditure would take place for years to come. There was the one platform, however, on which the Government and the public were entirely at one, and that was the obvious need of increasing both the land and sea forces, and of employing the most talented men in the service of the nation that were obtainable, to act as Japan's representatives at foreign capitals. The wisdom of these measures was amply demonstrated by the subsequent march of events. The Russian Minister drove to the Gai-Mu-Sho (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in Tokio, to deliver his message, at ten o'clock in the morning, and was at once received by the Cabinet Minister, on whom rested the responsibility of the post of Gaimukiyo. The proceedings were animated, but brief, and an assurance was given that his Excellency, the representative of the Tsar, should receive his passports within an hour.

At 10.35 a.m. a despatch was in course of transmission to every military and naval

depôt throughout the empire, containing the single word which warned the officials to be ready.

For weeks past there had floated through the mind of every telegraphist in the land the possibility of his one day receiving a stirring signal over the wires to "reserve the lines for State despatches;" and when at last it came, all were ready on the instant to thrust aside everything, and to watch the passage of the fateful dots and dashes of the Morse Code which spelt out the Ten-Shi's command to mobilize.

By eleven o'clock it had penetrated to the remotest centres, to the divisional head-quarters, to every naval station, and to every Ken-cho or seat of local government. Throughout Japan there was the wildest enthusiasm, the very mendicants in the by-ways joining in the universal shout of "Tei-koku Ban-zai!"

At Yokosuka, the nearest depôt to the capital, the vessels of war had steam up by noon, and every man in his place by nightfall,

the admiral having hurried down from Tokio after a prolonged interview with the Minister of Marine, Marquis Saigo.

The available fleet at this centre comprised two battle-ships, four cruisers, three gunboats, and one torpedo boat destroyer, with a flotilla of eleven torpedo boats.

It was assumed at the Naval Department that Russia would make her earliest effort on the south coast of Korea, where the Japanese had been established for many decades, the settlement of Fusan being to all intents and purposes a Japanese town. Fusan commands the high-road joining the Korean capital with the south-east provinces of the peninsula, and to cut off the communication at this point would be to completely isolate the little colony, and to place the Japanese troops in Korea between two fires. The virtual possession of Chemulpo on the west coast gave the Tsar's forces every facility for the invasion of this region, and were the base of operations facing Japan to fall into their hands the position of

the Japanese in the peninsula would become critical indeed.

It was of course open to the Russian admiral to create a diversion by an attack on Formosa, and whilst the Japanese were busy repelling it, to hurl the bulk of his forces against Korea, but the enormously strengthened fleet now belonging to the Mikado made it no longer easy to detach a sufficient squadron from Korean waters for a descent elsewhere. The outward-bound vessels of the Volunteer Fleet might attempt to land troops in Formosa, but the Japanese were fully prepared to offer effective opposition to this, as will appear hereafter.

Intelligence had been brought to Tokio before, that an expedition was fitting out at Vladivostock, the destination of which, it was believed, could be no other than the little island just to the south of Korea, known as Port Hamilton. This coign of vantage had long been coveted by the Tsar's representatives as a convenient spot from which to operate against the southern half of the Korean penin-

sula in the event of hostilities, and to prevent any permanent lodgment by the Japanese in that direction apart from their settlement of Fusan. But as Port Hamilton had once been held by Great Britain, other Powers were a little chary of laying hands upon it, on the principle that it may be unwise to run off with a big dog's bone, notwithstanding that he may seem to have his eye off it for the moment. Japan was just as fully aware of the strategical value of the little island, and would have secured it for herself had she not felt that until England openly declared that she had no intention of ever re-occupying the place, common civility would demand that it should be left unappropriated by the neighbours. But from the open way in which the plan had been discussed at Vladivostock in Russian circles it was judged that the St. Petersburg Government had come to some understanding with the British about it (in which case it was odd that no word of this had reached Japan through its London representative), or the

Russian admiral imagined that he might secure the place by a *coup de main.*

It was to be noted, however, that before any transports could reach the island, they would have to run the gauntlet of a hostile force cruising in the strait which separates Tsushima from Korea on the west, or that between Japan and Tsushima on the east.

CHAPTER III

BRITISH LOAN FOR CHINA

Russian influence in China—Intrigue at Peking—Absorption of Liao-tung—Port Arthur rebuilt—Designs on Wei-hai-wei—The Germans dissatisfied—Return of Japanese forces from North China—Orders for Debarkation in Korea—Despatch of Troops from Tokio—Transports assemble at Kuré.

THE ascendancy of the Russians in Peking politics had all along been viewed with apprehension by the Japanese, and it was from the first only too clear that the dominant idea in the Russian mind at the time when Japan was coerced into surrendering the hardly won province of Liao-tung, was that in the near future that same region should become one of the outposts of the Russian empire. The original

plan of the Trans-Siberian Railway was drawn with a terminus at Vladivostock, but it is conceivable that even at that time there was a more or less definite intention of carrying the line to Port Arthur. Vladivostock could never have been seriously chosen as a terminus, for its disadvantages as a port were notorious many years ago. But it would have created too much of a stir in political circles had Russia openly avowed her intention to possess herself of the Liao-tung peninsula, until matters had been much further advanced, and it was not until the St. Petersburg authorities saw the coveted prize being carried off by Japan that they found it necessary to put in a claim. Even then it was not expressed in so many words, but the Japanese quite comprehended and bitterly resented the transfer to the Tsar of a valuable strategical post which they had won for themselves by force of arms.

Nearly three years passed before Russia definitely established herself at Port Arthur, and then the occupation was studiously described

as temporary in character, but no real doubt existed among those who had followed Russia's methods as to the ultimate fate of the fortress. Certainly the Japanese were least of all likely to be deceived in regard to the use which Russia would make of her influence over the Chinese, and when it was explained that the Tsung-li-Yamun had agreed to Russia making the port a winter station for her fleet, Tokio politicians smiled sadly.

But it was when the German men-of-war suddenly acquired possession of Kiao-chau that Japan began to take real alarm, for her only security for the balance of the war indemnity exacted from China consisted of the harbour and forts of Wei-hai-wei, and at the outset of the German invasion of Shantung a programme of such magnitude was announced from Berlin, and deeds of so warlike a nature were fore-shadowed in the utterances of the Emperor Wilhelm, that no limit short of the unrestricted acquisition of the whole of Shantung and up to the banks of the Yellow River, seemed

likely to satisfy the Teutonic earth-hunger. Fortunately, from Japanese points of view, the Chinese evinced so much alacrity in complying with all the German demands on the instant, that there was barely time for any additional claim to be presented. And for the moment at all events, Japan felt safe in her temporary holding.

It was at this time that the proposal for raising a loan in Great Britain, or on a guarantee from the British Government, of twelve millions sterling, by which China should be enabled to discharge her liabilities to Japan and provide for other charges upon her national purse, began to be seriously entertained. Russian attempts to float a loan of smaller amount had failed ignominiously, for the revenue from the Chinese Customs on which it was proposed to secure the bondholders had been so heavily mortgaged beforehand that neither Russia nor any other Power might hope to add to its burdens in a way calculated to infuse confidence into the minds of prospective investors.

In London, it was supposed, the increased facilities for trade in the interior of China, which it was anticipated would shortly be given by the Peking Government, would be an inducement to the public to subscribe heartily, and that as some of China's old debts would shortly be extinguished she would certainly be in a position to pay off a new loan regularly. Our well-known readiness to open every place we possess to the free trade of all nations was relied upon to render superfluous any offer of a port for our own exclusive use. It would be useless, the Chinese considered, to offer us territory, because it would no sooner be handed over to us than we should invite all comers to share its advantages with ourselves.

Possibly China had slightly over-rated our generous impulses. That the money would be forthcoming on satisfactory assurances that the interest would be paid was beyond question, but it was far from being impossible that we might stipulate for some substantial *quid pro quo* in the shape of territory, which we might,

according to precedent, hold on lease for a term of years (the lease being renewable at the will of the lessee). To acquire land in another country on this basis was a *fin de siècle* idea, and possessed all the charm of novelty.

In Tokio the avowed object of the borrowers, to pay off the debt and release Wei-hai-wei, was received with unbounded satisfaction. For the maintenance of a numerous garrison in a place so distant from Japanese shores had occasionally proved to be something of an embarrassment, and was now a positive disadvantage, as the troops would shortly be needed elsewhere. Orders were at once transmitted to Wei-hai-wei regarding the course to be followed in the event of a telegram confirmatory thereof being received from Tokio. Provision was thus made for the debarkation of the brigade on Korean soil, should circumstances arise which might warrant its employment in connection with the campaign on which Japan was now setting out.

Extraordinary enthusiasm was displayed in

the Tokio thoroughfares on the day when the guards were entrained for Kuré, the naval depôt in the Inland Sea, near Hiroshima, which had been a centre of immense activity in 1894, when war was in progress with China. Popular ardour had attained great heights when that corps had been despatched to the conquest of South Manchuria, but it was exhibited in even a more unmistakable fashion on its departure for a new campaign, the issue of which was acknowledged to be in doubt, and might very possibly be adverse. All were animated by the spirit of the old Japanese lyric which has been so charmingly translated by a famous writer—

"Is my path upon the ocean yonder?
Let the waves my shipwrecked body hide!
Must I over plain and mountain wander?
Let my slain corpse 'neath the grass abide!
Where'er I cease,
For me no peace
Of last release,
I shall perish by my liege lord's side!"

The need of steamships to be employed as transports in the previous war had led to the

purchase of a large number of vessels suitable for this purpose, and the Nippon Yu-Sen Kaisha, or Japan Mail-boat Company, had during the interval of peace been able to take over a major proportion of this fleet, in the execution of its plans for the extension of Japanese commerce. On receiving orders from the Japanese Admiralty it was bound, under the conditions on which it received the subsidy annually given by the Government, to place its ships at the disposal of the Naval Department, and in consonance with this arrangement fifteen of the largest vessels had been despatched to Kuré to await instructions.

But there had been another and very important object attained in extending the range of Japanese commercial enterprise, and the Tokio authorities had so fully recognized the good work which was being done by the Mail-boat Company that a substantial increase in the grant was made, nominally for the conveyance of mail matter, but at least in part with the ulterior view of providing for the efficient

training of a large number of navigating officers, who should be capable, in any future emergency, of taking command of the transports. In the struggle with China, for lack of a sufficient supply of such officers, the Government had been driven to the necessity of engaging in their transport service many European and American commanders, and their subordinates, and it was not the least irritating of the charges laid at the door of the victors in that contest, that they had been indebted to the skill of foreigners for conveyance of the forces to and from Korea, Manchuria, and Shantung. Even at that time, as was amply demonstrated by the entire absence of mishaps, the navy possessed a sufficiency of qualified navigating lieutenants, for although there was never at any time a single foreigner on board the vessels of the Japanese fleet, not a warship was lost, or in any way injured, save in battle. But it had not been feasible for the Naval Department to detach any of its officers for the work of the transports, and the services

of foreign officers had been gladly availed of and loyally rendered. In the more extended field of operations which the Yu-Sen Kaisha thenceforward mapped out for itself the training conferred upon young naval officers was of immense value. To those who were able at this time to form any conception of the real policy of the Japanese Government, it was not a little entertaining to listen to the comments often made upon the action of the State in heavily subsidizing the Mail-boat Company. "They will burn their fingers in their attempts to compete with the commerce of Western nations," was the freely-expressed opinion of critics, and it seems never to have occurred to these censors of the Government policy that there could be any motive, beyond a mere disposition to embark in trade, underlying the special grant of money. And yet it was plainly enough asserted in the public press that it was an essential part of the scheme of the Naval Department that such experience as could be gained in this way should be at the disposal

of the State at any time, and naval cadets were placed on board the ocean-going craft of the Yu-Sen Kaisha's fleet for that express purpose.

The result of the Government's forethought was that there was an adequate number of qualified navigators available instantly on the outbreak of war, as well as seamen of all ranks, on the books of the naval reserve. It had been with this end constantly in view that the new mail routes had been inaugurated, to Australia, to London and Antwerp, and to Tacoma, in the United States.

CHAPTER IV

A QUESTION OF COAL SUPPLIES

Japan creates a diversion in China's favour—Lands an army near Gensan—Russians hastily quit Seoul—Japan's harbour defences—Coaling stations all in her hands—She holds the key to fuel supplies.

It was a foregone conclusion from the outset that the autocrat of all the Russias would not submit to the opposition which his agent now met with from the Japanese at Seoul, backed up even as they appeared to be by the influence to some extent of Great Britain. A Japanese squadron had made Chemulpo its rendezvous, and the display of force was not merely calculated to divert the minds of the Koreans from the contemplation of the fate

which Russia had designed for them, but to stimulate their flaccid muscles into something very like activity. And resistance on the part of a people whom Russia had marked for her own was not to be tolerated. So Japan would have to be punished, and the confidence which the Tsar's commanders felt in their ability to inflict the castigation was absolute.

But, as we have already seen, there was a general disinclination in Japan to submit to the infliction of the knout, and the Mikado's ministers had just reason to think that the proposed application thereof would prove to be a task demanding more strength than even Russia could bring to bear upon it.

To begin with, since the war with China had been concluded, many important additions had been made to the Japanese navy. Two huge ironclads had been delivered from foreign dockyards, the ships taken from the Chinese had been repaired and rendered fit to take the seas again, and the nation's own dockyards had been at work day and night to turn out some

most valuable cruisers and torpedo destroyers, as well as the smaller craft of which the Japanese have already shown that they can make good use. Many more vessels were in process of construction in European and American shipyards, but it had been recognized that these would not be available, for if completed they could not, under international obligations, be handed over to their purchasers. Taken in conjunction with the tried ships of the previous campaign, however, these additions helped to swell the total to dimensions which warranted the naval authorities in Tokio in their conviction that there was nothing now to fear from such forces as could be arrayed against them by any Power save Great Britain.

But this feeling of confidence did not cause them to in any degree relax their preparations, for they well knew that Russia would bring against them a fleet very different to that which they had contended with in the Gulf of Pechili, or at the mouth of the Yalu, in 1894. To

under-estimate the power of an antagonist is not a Japanese weakness.

Great impetus had been given to maritime affairs by the successful working of the Shipbuilding Encouragement Law, passed in 1895, and several yards had been established at ports in the southern provinces. Ships of all sizes were being turned out at prices which had attractions for capitalists, whilst owing to the rate of wages for skilled labour being yet considerably less than in European countries, a fair margin of profit accrued to the builders. The most advantageous division of labour was a thing not perfectly comprehended at first, and this militated against cheapness of production, but in the end the problem was solved satisfactorily, and the grant of a substantial bounty on purely native-built vessels contributed most beneficially to the spread of this industry throughout the empire.

The harbours of Moji, Karatsu, Hakata, and Misumi had all undergone to some extent a process of re-construction, and it was

proposed to form a large repairing dock at Hakodate, in the extreme north. This would be one of the most useful possessions to the nation, and promoted entirely by private enterprise. For many years, in fact ever since the new *régime* can be said to have had an existence in Japan, the very great need of a dockyard at this place had been keenly felt, and the scheme for its establishment was well calculated to afford satisfaction to the shipping interest. It was said that there were to be three slips, the first to be capable of accommodating vessels of 6000 tons—the second those of 1000 tons—and the smallest was to be of a size to suit the local traders. Hitherto in the event of a vessel sustaining any damage in northern latitudes there had been no dock in which she could be repaired nearer than Nagasaki, which is, roughly speaking, a thousand miles away, or Hong Kong, which is still farther off. The northern dock would be a benefit to the marine of all nations, and was safe to be fully appreciated, judging from the number and class

of ships which regularly resorted to the southern port annually, in need of overhaul. The defence of the Tsugaru Straits could be undertaken with the more confidence if it were felt that any slight repairs were possible at no greater distance than Hakodate.

Kariya, another place selected for the establishment of docking and repairing facilities, is nearer to Nagasaki, in the island of Kiushiu, and was certainly likely to become useful some day, from the ease with which it would be practicable to develop the resources of the vicinity. It lies in close proximity to an extensive coalfield, and is within an hour's steaming of the important naval depôt of Sasebo. There are eight fathoms close in shore, and a branch line of railway to connect the place with existing lines of railway was not likely to involve a great outlay, so that vessels would soon make it a port of call.

The national defence had been further secured by the formation of torpedo corps at all naval depôts, from which torpedo-lieutenants

were drafted to those vessels which had means of adding these to their armament. Submarine mining had been extensively resorted to along the exposed coasts of the east, north, and south-west.

Twenty millions of dollars had been recently allotted to the work of improving the harbour of Osaka, the late war with China having clearly shown how advantageous would be the possession of facilities for the embarkation of troops and munitions of war at this Liverpool of Japan in the event of another contest arising with a foreign Power. How good an investment this was, came to be clearly demonstrated in the course of the struggle on which Japan was now to embark.

But her real defence lay in her possession of practically the only stores of coal available in the Far East, save those of imported fuel stored at certain points by foreign governments for their own consumption—by the British Government at Singapore, for example.

Unless the Russians could obtain coal, the

campaign against Japan was destined soon to come to an end. They held stocks of coal in Vladivostock, but down south they had nothing to draw upon, unless the Japanese fleets could be annihilated and a levy made upon some such source of supply as Nagasaki or Karatsu.

To some extent the war resolved itself into a matter of coal supplies, and to these Japan held the key.

So long as the Mikado's ships retained possession of the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan, Russia could not hope to obtain the needful commodity, or not, at any rate, whilst Vladivostock harbour might be blocked by ice. Easy as the operation had perhaps seemed to be on paper merely, the presence of active defenders was an insuperable bar to the realization of any Russian project of raiding a coaling port, for the coasts were too well protected by forts and a mobile fleet, and though it is admitted that the western face of Kiushiu has numerous eligible and readily

accessible stores of the indispensable fuel, Japan must be unmistakably beaten before any of it becomes the property of a foe.

In estimating the strength of any naval Power in the Far East, the problem of coal supply becomes of the very first importance, and the astute Japanese had known this all along. Practically no other sources of supply existed than those controlled by their own people, and in this respect, if in no other, the navy of Japan possessed a distinct advantage. Any antagonist would have to bring with him a whole fleet of steam colliers, and to arrange for coaling his ships in mid-ocean.

CHAPTER V

A FIRST ENGAGEMENT AT SEA

Warships rendezvous at Shimonoseki—They depart by the west gate—Tsushima—Submarine telegraphs—Designs upon the cables—News of the Russian fleet—Defence of Formosa—Japanese admiral sails from Nagasaki—Is joined by warships from Sasebo—The Russians in sight—Engagement in Formosan Channel—Duel between ironclads.

MOJI BAY, with its majestic sweep of beach and dark background of pine-clad hills, had never seemed a more enticing spot, from a landsman's point of view, than it did on an early March morning as the rising sun shed its warm radiance over the rippling tide of Shimonoseki straits, and the neat roofs and terraced gardens of the populous townships which line

either shore. As the scores of native junks drifted and circled in the strong current, past the islets and beacons which stud the narrow channel, and rapidly made their way towards the town of Kokura and the open sea, the eye was arrested by the bulky form of the *Yashima*, one of the battle-ships lately launched at Elswick, and the pride of the Japanese navy. She was unquestionably a formidable vessel to all appearance as she steamed grandly on, past the lighthouse on Isaki Point, and dipped the ensign of the Rising Sun in response to the lightkeeper's salute as she swept by to the westward. But she did not go far beyond the ruins of the old batteries on the northern shore before her helm was seen to fly over, and with a half turn she brought up clear of the signal station by the shrine where the fishermen had assembled to propitiate the Japanese Neptune with their offerings, and implore for their nightly expeditions good weather and rich harvest of the deep. They heard her mighty anchor leap from its chains a moment later, and

a crew of blue-jackets quickly manned a boat for the shore, most likely to convey a telegram for the admiral to apprise him that she had reached the rendezvous. It shortly became evident that Bakan, as the port is commonly known to the Japanese, had been chosen as the meeting-place for a portion of the Western Squadron, for other vessels were seen to arrive during the day. The straits, so fancifully termed by some the Red Horse Barrier, form the connecting link between the Yellow Sea and the Suwo Nada, the widest part of the famed inland sea—that bewitching archipelago which divides the mainland of Nihon from the adjacent large islands of Shikoku and Kiushiu, each of which has an area approaching that of Ireland.

Two of the other ships came in by way of the Bungo Channel, thus rounding Isaki Point from the eastward, and the accuracy with which their arrival was timed was an indication of the presence of some skilful controlling hand behind the scenes. Altogether five of

the admiral's squadron had assembled here, and the day was made a festival by crowds of holiday-seekers, for familiar as are the citizens of Shimonoseki with the sight of large vessels passing through the straits, a chance to inspect a warship at close quarters does not very frequently occur, more especially one of the destructive capabilities of the *Yashima*. Her presence seemed to infuse a more than commonly martial spirit into the hearts of a people prone to remember, as they are at Shimonoseki, how often their place of abode has figured in the annals of their country's wars.

The day wore on until towards sundown, when an exceptional stir was created by the arrival of a small despatch boat from the westward, which came tearing along on the flood-tide, and ran in close to the senior commander's vessel, sending a boat alongside her as soon as the anchorage was reached. The squadron had been lying under banked fires, in readiness for a call, as it seemed, and within a few minutes of the despatch boat's arrival, all six

ships were under weigh, and threading the mazes of the islet-studded channel with easy confidence, the *Yashima* in the van.

Soon they sank out of sight from the Rokuren lighthouse, as they dropped below the western horizon, but a course was set to the north-west after dark, and by dawn the squadron was off Tsushima, that excellent outpost in the Sea of Japan which seems only of late to have received its due share of attention. In one of its almost landlocked harbours a navy of moderate dimensions might hide, in readiness to pounce upon any opposing fleet which might have the temerity to pass that way, between it and the coast of Korea. In Tsushima Sound, which lies between the twin islands bearing the name of Tsu, there is snug shelter from all prevailing winds, and good anchorage close to the shore, almost at the foot of the lofty hill known as The Ears, from its oddly-shaped double summit. The Japanese have expended large sums on the fortification of Tsu, and it may become an Asiatic Malta in

respect to its defensive and strategical value some day in the near future.

Submarine telegraphic communication had for many years existed between the village of Idzu-ga-hara on Tsushima, and the mainland of Japan on the one hand, and the kingdom of Korea on the other. So that the admiral, as soon as he reached the appointed place and joined his squadron, possessed the means of instantaneous touch with his base of supplies and with head-quarters in Tokio. But this even was not sufficient for his purpose, and he had come prepared to lay an additional cable to Tsushima Sound on the west shore of the island. For this undertaking he had temporarily taken into his command the *Okinawa Maru*, a ship specially constructed for cable-laying work, at Renfrew, in 1895, to the order of the Japanese Government. Acting in accordance with a pre-arranged plan, she forthwith proceeded to pay out a light cable which had been held in readiness for such an emergency, and within twenty-four hours

she had established a connection between the Idzu-ga-hara telegraph-office and herself, some twenty-five miles distant on the other side of the island. Having placed the apparatus on board a junk, which she requisitioned for the purpose as a floating telegraph-station for the fleet, she awaited the coming of the admiral to release her for other equally urgent work elsewhere.

The need of secrecy in all these operations was keenly felt, more particularly because the cable joining Nagasaki in Japan to Vladivostock in Siberia belongs in great part to Russian shareholders, it is said, and it was possible that the movements of the Japanese fleet might become known to the Russian admiral. There was a promising little scheme, duly labelled and tied with green ribbon, stowed away in the recesses of the Japanese admiral's desk, regarding the ultimate disposal of this cable, which would have formed interesting reading for the authorities at the Russian naval depôt could they have had access to it. Its provisions will become known

in due course, as the execution thereof had an important bearing on the contest in those waters.

Early in March news came to the Japanese Consul in Hong Kong that a Russian fleet had passed the Straits of Sunda, bound north, and it was surmised that its plan of campaign was to make a sudden descent upon Formosa, should no opposition be offered to its progress in the China Seas. As nothing had previously been heard of its approach, it was believed that it had coaled at sea from colliers previously sent to meet it. The Consul had promptly advised his Government of the circumstances, and the War Office realized that there was not a moment to be lost. At this time there were six men-of-war lying in the port of Nagasaki, and two more at Sasebo, which is only a few hours' steaming to the north of that place.

The probability, which had not escaped the attention of the Tokio War Department, that Russia might make her initial effort to crush

Japan by attacking Formosa, in an effort to deliver a telling blow at the very outset of the war, was much strengthened by the Hong Kong Consul's report. And it was necessary that Japan should resist this movement to the uttermost of her power. No little money had been laid out on the fortifications of the Beautiful Isle (though much more would have been done had there been more time), and strong garrisons had been posted at all the salient points on the coast. The telegraph-cable laid by the *Okinawa Maru* in 1897 enabled the Governor of the colony to appeal instantly to Tokio whenever an emergency might arise.

Marquis Saigo was soon in telegraphic communication with the admiral on the western station, and in a few hours the *Yoshino* —still the fastest cruiser of the Japanese navy —steamed into Nagasaki harbour with that officer on board. Having employed the wires to direct the two vessels at Sasebo when and where to join him at sea, he moved leisurely out of the harbour with as little display as

possible, but he was not suffered to leave altogether unnoticed, for several steam launches with Europeans aboard followed the fleet as far as Papenberg, and gave three cheers as the warships put on full speed towards the south. The object of the expedition had become fairly well divined.

During the night the admiral was joined by the ships from Sasebo, and subsequently the *Yoshino* was sent on ahead with despatches for the senior officer on the Loo-choo Islands station, enclosing sealed orders to be acted upon when in a certain position in the Pacific. The *Yoshino* was to coast to the southward, and bring word of the enemy's advance.

Meanwhile the Japanese main squadron steadily held on its way to the south-west, passing the Pescadores, and was cruising in the vicinity of that group when the *Yoshino* was sighted on her return voyage, having observed the Russians from a distance as they neared the Pratas shoal.

The hostile fleet was composed of an equal

number of vessels to the Japanese, as far as could be ascertained, but the battle-ships were of greater tonnage than either the *Fuji* or *Chinyen*, the most powerful of the admiral's command, and there was safe to be severe fighting ere victory should be declared for either party in the strife. It was for Russia to maintain the dignity and prestige of her European status, and it was equally incumbent on Japan to look to it that she lost none of the laurels which she had gained by her triumph over the Chinese.

The next morning the Russians came into view on the southern horizon, and the Japanese admiral prepared to give them battle.

It was part of his plan of operations to draw his antagonists in a south-easterly direction toward the South Cape of Formosa, and he had a good reason for doing so. Accordingly, as the vessels approached each other, the *Fuji* and *Matsushima*, which led the two columns into which the Japanese force had been divided, gave way a little to the eastward.

The Russian flagship opened fire at a distance of two miles, and was instantly answered from the *Fuji*. At the same time the torpedo tubes were made ready on the latter ship for launching her Whiteheads at her opponent. Her tubes being under water, the discharge of the deadly missiles occasioned no ripple on the surface, and the constant drill outside Nagasaki harbour which her gunners had had with this form of weapon since the war with China, made them confident of striking their mark. In fact the torpedo has become in Japanese hands a more than ever formidable engine of war, and they may be relied upon to make efficient use of it in every encounter.

The Russian's first shot fell sufficiently close to the *Fuji* to indicate that the range would be obtained at the next attempt, and forthwith the Japanese commander made direct for the opposing ships, followed by the *Akitsushima* and other vessels. When within a comparatively short distance the *Fuji* opened her fire from her barbettes, and using her twin screws

to the greatest advantage, she manœuvred to place herself bow on to her chief antagonist. At the precise moment she launched two torpedoes fairly and squarely at her foe, and although her intention had evidently been fully comprehended on board the Russian, the relative slowness of movement by a single propeller prevented her from turning as quickly as was desired, and she received the blows of both torpedoes on her starboard bow and quarter, the impact having prodigious effects. Profiting by the experience gained at the battle of the Yalu, the Japanese never ceased to rain a downpour of shot and shell from the quick-firers of her armament, whilst she delivered her torpedo attack, but the Russian response to this was equally effective, for a fire was maintained from her tops which swept the *Fuji* from stem to stern. Both ships had, indeed, kept up a constant harassing fire from machine guns from the instant that they had got within range, and in this respect there was nothing to choose between them.

And as the Russian was well provided with torpedoes, it now became a trial of speed and skill in navigation as much as anything, each endeavouring to avoid exposure broadside on to the missiles of the other—a contest in which the advantage lay with the twin screw, for she could turn in little more than her own length. Half-an-hour had been spent in this effort to plant a decisive blow, when it became evident that the Russian vessel was becoming more and more unmanageable, probably from the injuries which she had sustained at the outset, and it also became clear that her commander had resolved on a final effort to ram. Even at the best of times the operation is a perilous one, and in his case it was justified only by his desperate condition, for in the presence of so active a foe it became almost suicidal. On he came at full speed, firing all his guns as he came, and a moment's hesitation on the part of the *Fuji's* captain or a momentary accident to her steering gear would have given the Russian commander his opportunity. But all

on board the Japanese moved with the precision acquired by constant drill and experience under fire, for most of her officers had been in the engagements of 1894-5 in Korean and Chinese waters. She cleverly avoided the Russian's stroke by a rapid turning of her propellers, and as her foe swept past she shot at her a third torpedo which had the effect of completely tearing up her hull, and sending her reeling to leeward, to sink out of sight in a few more seconds beneath the green seas of the Nan-Hai. She sank with her men all standing to their guns, chanting amid the din of battle the praises of their Tsar, and though the *Fuji's* boats were all instantly lowered, in an effort to save some of the brave fellows, there were but few who floated long enough to be picked up alive.

In this first noteworthy encounter of the war it was abundantly manifested that the expectations of naval strategists regarding the employment of "ram, gun, and torpedo" in actual fight were not without substantial basis.

The use of the ram, in a general way, is destined to be more harmful to the rammer than the rammed, and the memorable exploits of the *Shah* in repelling the efforts of the Peruvian ironclad to ram her in South American waters years ago, were repeated by the *Fuji*, proof being again forthcoming that a well-handled ship capable of turning quickly may defy every attempt of a hostile vessel to catch her in a position when the ram could be used to good effect.

During the progress of the duel between the two ironclads the remaining vessels on both sides had been exceedingly busy, though their movements had been in great part hidden from the *Fuji* by the smoke of battle. The *Akitsushima* had attacked a Russian cruiser, from the well-served guns of which she had received a terrible handling. The *Matsushima* had made good use of her famous Canet gun, which did such an amount of execution at the Yalu engagement in 1894. She also had suffered severely from the fire of her

antagonist, and was disabled at the close of the action.

But after two hours of severe fighting an important addition was made to the ranks of the combatants.

From the direction of South Cape came the dense smoke of Japanese coal, emitted by vessels which palpably were not stinted of fuel in their endeavour to reach the scene of strife. As the clouds now and then lifted it was easy to discern that these too were warships. Rapidly approaching, the leading ship was seen to fling out the banner of the Rising Sun to the breeze, and the admiral signalled his commands to her from the *Fuji*.

Simultaneously the Russian admiral became conscious of the danger of being placed between two fires, and the issue of the contest was no longer in doubt, for, harassed by the attack of the newly-arrived vessels, and having already sustained heavy losses, he withdrew from the combat, fighting as he went, towards the south. In his retreat he was attended by his active

foes until darkness and the well-known difficulties of navigation in that part of the China Sea prompted a cessation of the chase.

When the Japanese came to reckon up their losses, successful as they had been in driving away their foe, they found that victory had been achieved at a heavy cost, for two of their ships had disappeared beneath the waves, and though, as was believed, they had disposed of three Russian ships, the surviving vessels of their own squadron bore marks of the severity of the Russian fire. The *Naniwa* and *Idzumi* were both badly injured, and the *Akitsushima* had been struck by a torpedo, though not in such a way as to sink her.

As pre-arranged, the admiral made his way to the port of An-Ping, whither it was expected the others of his command would shortly rendezvous, after their chase of the enemy.

CHAPTER VI

CAMPAIGN IN KOREA

Operations in Korea—Northward march on Gensan—Troops landed at Fusan—Chemulpo seized—The Korean Emperor visits Tokio.

THE fair measure of success which had attended the Japanese in their naval operations in the south now emboldened them to carry on with greater spirit those military undertakings in Korea which were on the point of execution at the instant when attention was necessarily diverted to the threatened descent upon Formosa. It had been declared to be the aim of their powerful foes to force on a campaign before Japan had had time, as was imagined, to complete her arrangements after the strain of

the 1894-5 struggle. And could the Russian admiral have destroyed the flower of the Mikado's navy in Southern Chinese waters, there is no doubt that the invasion of Korea by Japan, to take a Russian view of the exploit, would never have been attempted, or at the least it would have been postponed indefinitely. The substantial defeat inflicted on the Russian squadron off South Cape had effectually changed the relative status of the combatants, and Japan felt justified in her assumption of an actively hostile attitude along the whole line, as it were, instead of awaiting the attack of her opponent. Preparations had never been suspended during the progress of the action off Formosa, and the moment that the cable conveyed a report of the admiral's success, steps were taken to accelerate the pace at all the naval and military depôts. A part of the transport fleet had been laden with war material, and was in readiness to sail from Kuré immediately that the men came aboard on their arrival from the northern barracks.

Matters were equally far advanced at Tsuruga, on the west coast, and vessels were likewise lying in that port to convey across to the peninsula of Cho-Sen a fully equipped army corps for employment in the section of Korea nearest to the Russian frontier, whilst that assembled at Kuré was destined for active hostilities in the region to the southward of the Korean capital.

As far as was known the main portion of the Tsar's naval force still lay snugly at Vladivostock, and the sea was believed to be clear of enemies, but the Japanese admiral on the station, with characteristic wariness, nevertheless resolved that the transports should be convoyed across by those vessels under his charge which were at Maidzuru, close by. Accordingly these were ordered round to Tsuruga, in time to set out with the expedition, which was directed to make for a certain very eligible spot on the opposite shore which had previously been selected.

The squadron consisted of two line-of-battle

ships, of modern type, and three cruisers,—one possessing high speed. There were two more ships in the Tsugaru Straits which could be called upon if desired. Farther north, too, there were three vessels of war cruising around the Yeso coast, which a telegram would quickly have reached had the admiral felt the need of more power.

The northern section of the expedition set out in due course from Tsuruga for the peninsula, and in about forty-five hours was off the point of debarkation. This was close to the little town of Anbyong, some thirty miles to the south of Gensan. Here a camp was formed, and a strong contingent was sent into Gensan, only to find that the Russian force which had previously been quartered there had been withdrawn a few days before. The telegraph to the Korean capital had been cut west of Gensan. For the time being, therefore, all means of communication between the expedition and the Japanese capital had been destroyed, but the probability of this happening

had been taken into account in planning the raid, and as a first step the corps of engineers trained in this work were speedily engaged in setting up a light military telegraph along the strip of comparatively level country between Gensan and the camp. The *Okinawa Maru* had been busily engaged in another way, after obtaining her release from the admiral at Tsushima. The effect of her work was soon apparent. For the moment it is necessary to comprehend the nature of the movement which had been some days in progress farther south.

As soon as the wires had conveyed word to him that the transports had taken the troops on board at Kuré, the commander of the squadron employed in observations off Tsushima moved in to Shimonoseki, to meet them and protect them in the passage over to Fusan. All were safely landed—men and material—on Korean soil three days after setting out from the Inland Sea depôt. The port of Fusan having been long in Japanese hands was most serviceable as a base of operations

against the capital, and soon after their arrival the bulk of the troops composing the southern section of the expeditionary force were marching on Seoul.

Meanwhile a smaller body of men had been taken round by sea to seize the port of Chemulpo, and this operation was supported by several of the ships of the southern squadron, though it was not apprehended that any effective resistance would be offered.

The Japanese have been severely handled by political critics for this assault—as some insist upon terming it—upon a weak and unoffending nation, but when judged even by the European standard it is difficult to condemn their action if we pause to consider what the occupation of the Korean peninsula by the forces of the Tsar would have meant for Japan. So long as the semblance of good government was maintained in Korea, and its independence secured, the peninsula interposed a very serviceable barrier between the Mikado's empire and possible foes, but when a condition which was practically

that of anarchy began to prevail, the case was materially altered. It was foreseen that Russia would take the opportunity to interfere, upon one pretext or another, and ultimately—for such is commonly the fate of kingdoms and khanates in which the Government of the Tsar takes a special interest—Korea would be absorbed into the dominions of Holy Russia for ever. To have the port of Vladivostock confronting Northern Japan at a distance of little more than a day's run, is bad enough in its way, considering the known tendencies of Russian diplomacy, but then this port is closed for six months of the year by ice. To have the Great White Chief's territory extending to a point as far south as the latitude of South Nihon, and separated therefrom by a narrow strait merely, is quite another matter, for the adjacent port of Fusan is always open in winter. With the Japanese it has been throughout a question of self-preservation, and against that innate conviction sophistry may be employed in vain.

The *corps d'armée* which had been despatched to invest the Korean capital had had no very severe task set it to perform. During the Russian ascendancy there the weak and vacillating monarch of Korea had suffered his visitors to practically, though not openly, rule his country, for they had so worked upon his fears of assassination as to reduce him almost to a nonentity. The Russian Minister was throughout this period the arbiter of the destinies of Korea and its people. When, therefore, the advance contingent of the Japanese appeared before the gates of Seoul, the infatuated king was instigated by the Russian party to show fight, promising him all the aid that they could afford. Never was a ruler more misled as to the strength of his defences. His Russian-drilled corps of native soldiers proved to possess not one spark of military spirit, and his gunboats were but playthings. The Russian force of legation guards, who might have done some service on a push, were numerically so weak as to be beneath serious

notice as a fighting force. The army now close to his capital, of Japanese veterans, numbered 12,000 all told, and comprised artillery, infantry, and cavalry. There was a momentary tussle at one of the gates,—it was nothing more,—and the invaders quietly took possession of Seoul, imprisoning the king in his own palace. The Russian representative was allowed to depart from Chemulpo with his servants immediately. He had entertained the king for over a year in the Russian legation, until the Koreans actually began to grow restive under the continued effacement of their nominal sovereign, and at last declined to believe in his existence any longer unless they received proof that he still continued to take an active part in the affairs of his subjects. His Majesty accepted the new position in which he found himself with admirable equanimity. Truth to tell, of the two things he preferred to be the vassal of the Mikado to that of the Tsar. It might at least be urged that Japanese and Koreans had something in common, and

though the former possessed a far more abundant store of energy, the disposition of the bulk of the Korean emperor's subjects could only be regarded as eminently peaceful and tolerably industrious. In fact, in the Korean people there is a power of application, when they choose to exert it, which bodes well for their future, if their confidence in the ruling authority be but re-established on a firm basis. It must be admitted that for some decades past there has been little in the management of national affairs at Seoul to inspire that confidence.

The Emperor Li-Hsi was not ill-pleased, then, to feel that his Russian friends, who had virtually made him a prisoner in his own capital for more than twelve months, had at last been compelled to vacate his dominions, and the experience which he had obtained in former years of the Japanese system of administration whilst Count Inouye was at Seoul as Japan's representative, convinced him that the rule of the conquerors, whether direct or

indirect, would be such as to improve the condition of his truly unhappy country.

At all events the Japanese Government in this matter showed a commendable amount of resolution, and having obtained control of the Land of Morning Calm, proceeded vigorously to set the house of State in order, to consolidate the position of the governing departments, and to prepare in a general way for such emergencies as were not unlikely to arise. For it was too much to expect that those rival factions which had, for years, been accustomed to look upon Seoul as a spot specially marked out to be the arena in which they should settle their differences, would all at once divest themselves of this impression, and lead orderly lives.

The Government of Japan, having studied the mode of procedure adopted by some Western Powers in their treatment of fallen foes, determined that this time there should be no mistake as to their real intentions, for, following the example set them in Africa and elsewhere, they invited the Korean monarch to remove

to Tokio, as a safer place than his own capital for his permanent residence, where he was to be regarded as the honoured guest of the Japanese Government, at all events until such time as complete tranquillity could be restored in the peninsula.

The royal guest almost gratefully assented, for his experience of life had been of a nature to prompt him to escape as best he might from the cares and dangers of regal state. He placed himself in the hands of his captors unreservedly, and was wise in doing so, for he could rely upon considerate treatment.

He went on board the *Yoshino* at Chemulpo, with his retinue, and was well tended on the voyage. The other Japanese warships in port fired a royal salute as the *Yoshino* steamed out on her way to Tokio.

CHAPTER VII

CHINESE EMPIRE IMPERILLED

Division of Kwantung province—Advance of the French into Yunnan—Trouble among the Mahommedans on the Kansu frontier—An outbreak feared of Secret Society rebels—The Triads and the Dunganis—Effects of the Cassini Convention—The German influence in Shantung.

THAT which has been termed the partition of China began with the operations of Russia in the north of that empire at least twenty years ago. In the south it commenced at a much later date. Russia had moved upon Manchuria —France upon Yunnan, Kwang-si, and the isle of Hainan. The encroachment was so gradual as to have almost escaped notice save in those circles for which the steady advance

of the two Powers named possessed a certain interest. China is so far away from us that it is only when some startling effects are produced that our attention becomes attracted to its vast expanse of territory. The authority of a throne might become undermined by the insidious spread of disaffection through secret societies, or extraneous influence might be exerted by the agents of ambitious rival Powers, and few would know that the existence of a dynasty had become endangered until the crash had been heard throughout Europe. That some such process of disintegration had been going on for years could scarcely be doubted, when it was seen how little real resistance could be offered by the "central" administration of Peking to the occupation of outlying provinces. But in all likelihood the catastrophe was precipitated by the action of the German emperor in seizing Kiao-chau, a harbour on the south coast of Shantung. The absolute impossibility of resistance being successfully offered by the Chinese Government to an appropriation of

this character was demonstrated so conclusively that it was felt the Manchu rule had received its death-blow, unless some Power friendly to its continued existence should at once intervene. In any case China's weakness had been thoroughly exposed, and a system was inaugurated under which the nations of the East and of the West alike entered upon a scramble for territory. Such at all events was the impression produced on the public mind by the unseemly haste with which hands were stretched out towards one portion and another of the inheritance of the "Sick Man of the Far East."

In reality these demands did not arise on the spur of the moment, however, as far as can be judged, but had been framed at leisure, to be formulated in detail whenever the time should be ripe for their proclamation.

Great Britain was loud in her expressions of a determination not to profit in a territorial shape by China's obvious embarrassment. She held fast to the doctrine that

trading considerations must have first place, and demanded that China should be opened to all nations without distinction, for the purposes of general commerce and industry. But by some it was held that her stipulations in this respect were presumptuous and unreasonable, in view of the bargain which it was hinted had been made under which her rivals in Egypt had agreed to give her a free hand there. In plain words, the price set upon their pledge of abstention in Egyptian affairs was to be a promise of non-interference in the approaching dismemberment of the Chinese empire.

Whatever might be the true interests of Great Britain in Farther Asia, it was quite clear that she could not in common decency take part in a scramble for exclusive rights, after having advocated unceasingly the strict observance of principles of free trade and open competition. But there was some basis for the supposition that she was prompted to a vigorous reiteration of this policy by the threatened absorption of Hainan by France,

for Hainan forms part of the province of Kwantung, which actually contains within its natural boundaries land which belongs to the British, *i.e.* Kowloon, and is the mainland from which Hong Kong is separated by a strait of one mile in width only. Hainan considered as an island off the coast of China merely was one thing, but Hainan as part of Kwantung was something of vastly more importance to Great Britain. If her unwillingness to put pressure upon China, as a moribund Power, prompted her to abstain from any semblance of an attempt to acquire territory, it was equally desirable that other nations should practise similar abstinence.

If ever the partition of China comes to be an accomplished fact, we may look for some arrangement whereby the Si-kiang—that "west river" which has so frequently been alluded to as desirable property—is established as the boundary in Kwantung of the French sphere of influence, Great Britain taking under her control that portion of the province which lies

to the north of that stream. France would thus obtain an extension of territory in Southern China, which would cover all the lower half of Kwantung, including Hainan, and to Great Britain would fall that half containing Canton, Hong Kong, and Swatow.

But owing to the part played by Japan, the complete partition of the Celestial Empire may be looked upon as indefinitely postponed, though by no means rendered impossible. How far Japan has been stimulated by Great Britain's example to adopt her present course of action is a question to which no answer is likely to be forthcoming for some time.

It is conceivable that with a renewal of the outburst of Mahommedan rebellion in Kansu and Yunnan, the tendency to which is ever present, and appears to tax the strength of the Chinese Government to even temporarily suppress, circumstances may arise which will one day compel the British Government to contemplate an extension of its own "sphere of influence" beyond Burmah, as far as the

sources of the West River, which will mean the annexation of nearly the whole of Yunnan. France has long had an eye upon this province of Yunnan as a convenient direction in which to enlarge her boundaries from the Tonquin side. And if we do not annex Yunnan, some day France will be sure to find an opportunity of doing so. With the three great rivers Yangtse, Meikong, and Salween, as well as a large affluent of the Irrawadi—the Lung-chuen—draining the province, its natural advantages can be recognized, and two of these valuable waterways find an outlet in what is already British territory.

The most serious danger to the preservation of the Chinese empire in its integrity may, however, lie in the admitted vitality of the secret societies to which reference has already been made. The Triads, an organization which gave infinite trouble to the Manchu dynasty in the first half of the present century, seem to be again powerful for mischief. China has nothing to learn from the Nihilists, or any

other body, in regard to the establishment of brotherhoods which have for their goal the attainment of some definite, and, it may be, legitimate object. The Triads sprang into existence as the "Society of Celestial Reason" —in Chinese the *Tien-ti-hwui*—and to it was joined the Water-Lily Society, which had flourished conspicuously in the provinces of Su-chuen and Shantung. The first of these provinces adjoins Thibet, and lies between Yunnan and Kansu, all three provinces being so far from Peking as to make direct supervision a matter of impossibility, a circumstance which naturally tends to foster ideas of successful resistance to the Manchu yoke. The political societies of China invariably adopt a title which is well calculated to obscure the real motive of their formation, and thus it might have been inferred that the band of brothers which had chosen as its badge the chaste and harmless water-lily, would in all likelihood cherish designs which were of a nature the very reverse of those to which so

pure an emblem could appropriately be attached.

The Tungani, or Dungani, dwelling in the regions adjoining Eastern Turkestan, have been more or less troublesome for thirty-five years past, and, as far as the meagre information derivable from that remote quarter carries us, are in rebellion even now. Chinese civilization has failed to improve the condition of these dwellers on the very outskirts of the empire, and when they become finally enrolled beneath the banner of the Tsar the loss to Peking will be practically inappreciable.

Under the terms of a treaty said to have been entered into by China in 1896, the Russians acquired a right to build the Trans-Siberian Railway to Port Arthur in Liao-tung, the southernmost of the three divisions of Manchuria. Other railway concessions are said to have been made under this Cassini Convention, the existence of which was long denied. It was supposed to confer the right to carry the railway system to Peking, and to

exploit the mineral wealth of Manchuria. In case of war Russia was to be at liberty to use Port Arthur as a base of operations, and was to lease the port of Kiao-chau for fifteen years. The railways built under this arrangement were to be purchasable by China after the expiration of thirty years only. Russian soldiers were to be employed on these railways for the duties of "controlling" them. The construction and working rights were, it was asserted, subsequently given by the Tsar to an Eastern Chinese Railway Company, the shareholders in which new concern were to be either Russian or Chinese subjects. It is palpable that this convention was not designed to be carried out in its entirety, or Germany would scarcely have been able, at a subsequent date, to possess herself of Kiao-chau, likewise on a "lease." Opinions differ very considerably with regard to the value of Kiao-chau as a port. The bay is shallow and unsuitable, except near the entrance, as an anchorage for large ships of war. It is rather open to the south-east, the

direction from which heavy gales are not uncommonly experienced. The probability is that an extraordinarily long pier must be constructed to facilitate the loading and discharge of vessels if the trade of the region ever becomes sufficiently developed to warrant such an outlay.

CHAPTER VIII

SECOND NAVAL BATTLE

Naval engagement off Tsushima—The Russian ironclad and the *Yashima*—A contest between modern battleships—Torpedo attacks.

THE inherent difficulty of defending so extensive a sea-board as that possessed by Japan against attack by a maritime foe was never more acutely felt. Indeed, the only experience which the inhabitants of those favoured isles had had of hostile operations on their shores, had come to them in their efforts to repel the British attack on Kagoshima, and the assault of Shimonoseki by the allies, many years before, when the object in view had been the infliction of punishment on the Dai-mios

of Satsuma and Choshiu respectively. Such experience was of little or no avail at the present juncture against modern weapons of precision, though it was true that the coast-guard service had been well organized, and that a chain of fortresses stretched all the way from Kagoshima to Matsumaye, the extreme south to the extreme north, with only few vulnerable spots between them where a landing could even be attempted, and that troops could speedily be concentrated on any place along the coast which might be threatened. The unavoidable absence of the main defensive squadron in the south, in which there were some of the finest ships in the navy, constituted to some extent an element of weakness. The responsibility of the situation fell the more heavily upon the admiral in command in the Sea of Japan, whose charge, though including some formidable vessels, could only be esteemed as second-rate.

It was a matter of the greatest moment to the Japanese that they should possess and

retain permanently the command of the seas adjacent to their own isles. Although the northern fleet of the Russians was practically inoperative at Vladivostock, there was still the danger of the surviving ships of the outward-bound squadron, which had been encountered off Formosa, working their way by a circuitous route to the assistance of the Russian land forces said to be invading Korea from the northern boundary. It was just feasible, for example, that the Russian admiral might voyage round by the Kurile group, provided that he could effect a passage to the open sea south of the Loo-choo Isles, to do which, however, he would have to run the gauntlet of the fleet which the Japanese admiral had with him in that quarter.

Further speculation was rendered superfluous, however, one morning shortly afterwards, by the arrival at Kanasawa, just at dawn, of the despatch vessel *Yayeyama*, an exceedingly fast ship of her class, and capable of steaming twenty-one knots, which ran into this port on

the west coast of Nihon, and quickly lowered a boat, by which she sent a telegram ashore to be signalled at once to the capital. Could we have peeped over the telegraphist's shoulder as he transmitted it, we should have seen that it read thus—

"From Commander NAGAYAMA
"To NAVAL DEPARTMENT, TOKIO.

"The enemy's fleet left Vladivostock noon yesterday, bound south."

The *Yayeyama* had been stationed off the port of Vladivostock, at a safe distance, for the express purpose of bringing timely intelligence of any decided movement, and she had performed her duty well, having run her distance to Kanasawa in eighteen hours.

Thirty minutes later this message was in the hands of the admiral on board his flagship at Tsushima, and he made his dispositions accordingly.

Emerging from the harbour, which had for

some days sheltered his fleet, he took the lead in the Tyne-built *Yashima*, followed by the *Chiyoda*, *Hashidate*, *Kwanto*, *Itsukushima*, and *Tsukuba*, in the order named. The *Kwanto* and *Tsukuba* were purchased vessels which had recently been added to the Mikado's fleet. After them came the flying squadron, comprising three of the fastest vessels of the navy, with the despatch boat *Gan* not far away. In this formation they steamed to the northward in the expectation of falling in with the Russians, and at 1.30 p.m. the look-out announced smoke on the horizon, which shortly afterward became plainly visible in the form of a dense cloud low down. It was evident the enemy had no great store of Welsh coal.

By 3 p.m. the rival fleets were within long range, and the Japanese admiral hoisted at the main of the *Yashima* a *fac-simile* of the renowned banner of Taiko-sama, the warrior of three centuries ago. A simultaneous roar of delight resounded from stem to stern as this potent emblem was unfurled, and it needed no

other exhortation to ensure that every man on board that day would do his duty. "Taiko! Taiko!" were the cries which rang for a minute on all sides.

The first shot in the contest was fired by the *Yashima*, from her forward turret, and was aimed at the vessel in the van of the Muscovite fleet; the missile struck its mark, though not precisely as had been calculated, for it was a trifle too high to hit her hull, and instead brought down the mast on which one instant before the flag of Russia had been gaily fluttering. The huge steel structure with its fittings toppled over and fell to the deck. The sight of the damage which they had inflicted put a good heart into the gunners, and the feat was loudly cheered from the *Chiyoda*. Quick as thought the Russian commander had his ensign re-hoisted, but he did not instantly reply, for the reason that the working of his guns was temporarily interfered with. But the ship immediately in his rear took up the gage, and sent a telling shell straight at the *Yashima*,

which took effect close to her bridge, and effectually silenced her for the moment. Thus early in the encounter did the marksmen on both sides prove the accuracy of their aim, and the perfection in manipulation of heavy guns to which they had attained. This was no one-sided struggle, such as the critics had declared the Yalu fight to have been, but a contest between foemen of equal skill, and almost equal training.

Soon the strife became general all along the line, and the Russian admiral took care that he did not give any advantage away, but led his squadron against the Japanese in practically the same formation as they had adopted, namely, double column, in line ahead. The Russian strength lay principally in two new ironclads which immediately followed the flag. As the vessels approached to within close range it was seen that the second was signalled to engage the *Yashima*. The latter, prepared for such a move on the part of the enemy, bore away as though declining the challenge, but at

that instant three attendant torpedo boats which had been steaming at her side, screened from view, shot out from under her stern and made for the Russian ship.

The latter's machine guns and quick-firers poured a hail of bullets and shot upon the little craft the moment the danger was perceived, and two out of the three drifted helplessly to leeward, but the third survived the fire, and was able to launch her weapon fairly at her mark. In the momentary confusion it was not clearly seen what took place, but it turned out afterwards that the deadly Whitehead had passed through the netting before it exploded, and though the full force of the blow was mitigated by the distance from the ironclad's hull, there was still sufficient energy in the projectile to administer a severe shock, and the Russian reeled from the impact, immediately taking an ugly list to port. It was subsequently noticed that she steered wildly, and the torpedo had in fact made havoc toward the stern, damaging the propeller, and wrecking

the rudder, so that she was incapable of effective movement, although she continued to make good use of her heavy guns. Meanwhile the other ironclad had singled out the *Kwanto* for special attention, and a duel of the most determined character was going on between these splendid ships, a contest which it was evident must end in the total destruction of one or the other, and very possibly of both. They lay at a distance of less than three cables' length from one another, and pounded away at close range with their 30-centimetre guns in a fashion which was terrible to witness. Both had torpedo boats out, but the nettings with which the combatants had been fitted kept away many a well-aimed missile of this kind, and no perceptible damage was done for a time to either vessel, though there was an ominous settling down by the stern visible when the Russian showed herself through the veil of smoke in which she was often wrapped. After the lapse of half-an-hour the *Kwanto* momentarily emerged from the cloud, and it was seen

that she had an unmistakable list also, but her antagonist had ceased firing from her heavier weapons, and merely used her small quick-firers, the truth being that both her turrets had been shelled by the *Kwanto* into a condition of immobility. Both ships were yet in possession of their steam power, however, and at this stage of the combat the Russian commander sought to finish the affair by ramming his opponent. His vessel lay off for a minute or two, like some tigress about to spring, and then putting forth all the power of her engines, she made directly for the *Kwanto*, in an attempt to run that vessel down. But her intention had been divined on board the Japanese ship and as the Russian came rapidly on, the *Kwanto's* bows swept round to face her foe. A collision of some sort was inevitable, but the blow delivered by the ram was an oblique one, and failed to penetrate the *Kwanto's* armour. On the other hand the opportunity was seized by her to pour a terrific fire into the Russian from every available weapon, and Maxims,

quick-firers, and every gun that could be brought to bear, rained their shot and shell upon the Russian's least protected parts, in a way that defied all attempts to return the fire, though the Russians had evidently not underestimated their danger, and made a brave effort to cope with it when a few seconds too late to get upon even terms. The huge ships were almost immediately a cable's length apart, for the Russian had not slackened her pace, but the *Kwanto* was the quickest to get round, and tore after her opponent in a palpable eagerness to return the compliment, the movements of the Russian being to some degree hampered by the injuries which she seemed to have sustained from the other's torpedo fire. At all events she was not quickly enough turned to avoid the blow delivered by her foe, which took effect just abaft the bridge, and inflicted a gash in her side through which the sea poured in rapidly. It was now the turn of the Russian to damage her foe irretrievably, for she succeeded in driving a torpedo at the

Kwanto as that vessel was momentarily exposed, and without the protection of her nettings, which had been forced in by the contact. The terrible missile told, and it was clear that the Japanese battle-ship had received her death-blow. She immediately began to settle down, but continued to work her guns up to the last moment, and inflicted lasting injuries on her destroyer with her heavier ordnance. Deeper and deeper sank the doomed ship, as the waters poured into her engine-room, and having lost the power to train her big guns, though still able to use her Maxims, she sank beneath the waves, at first gently, then with one awful plunge that took her suddenly from view. The last sound that was heard from her decks, at the moment that her fire ceased, and she commenced to sink rapidly, was a prolonged shout of "Tei-koku Ban-zai!" again and again repeated from five hundred throats, as she went under, with her colours all flying, and her officers standing on her bridge.

The Russian fared but little better, only

that her agony was more prolonged, for she was seen to be in a hopelessly sinking state at the time when her rival disappeared, and she now rolled a log upon the waters. So completely had her machinery been deranged that she was absolutely incapable of movement or individual effort of any kind, and drifted away out of range.

The battle was still proceeding fiercely between the remaining ships, for another vessel had taken the place of the ironclad which was first disabled by the *Yashima's* torpedo fire, and had carried on the encounter vigorously, neither coming out of it scatheless. The *Kwanto's* commander, the bulk of his men, and some of the officers were picked up by the despatch boat, which had steamed to their assistance directly their perilous predicament was perceived, and they were not much the worse for their immersion. They found that the admiral was still carrying on the fight. The *Gan* waited to pick up all the survivors of the *Kwanto's* crew whom she could succour,

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and then made at full speed for the coast of Tsushima, towards which the fighting fleets had drifted in course of their evolutions. For the battle had raged so continuously that the energies of all had been driven into one channel—the annihilation of the opposing vessels, large and small.

As the *Yashima* again came close to the contending squadrons the admiral saw that the day was by no means lost, for during his own sharp engagement some of his fleet had been actively disposing of the enemy's force, and now held an excellent position. Originally the Russians had been numerically stronger than the Japanese, but the lack of numbers was compensated by the superior quality of the ships flying the Rising Sun ensign. There were actually twelve Russian vessels all told, to ten Japanese, at the outset, but when the *Yashima* again came on the scene there were but seven of the opposing fleet visible, and two of her own side had disappeared, besides the *Kwanto.* Three old-fashioned Russian craft of

the unprotected type, and with them two of modern build, second-class cruisers, in fact, had all gone down, taking with them one of the victors in the Yalu fight of years before, and one of the latest productions of the dockyard at Yokosuka. The *Itsukushima* had fought and sunk her opponent with well-aimed discharges from her formidable Canet, and the *Hashidate* had steamed up to a powerful cruiser which, in turn, had tried her utmost to ram, but the *Hashidate* was too cleverly handled for her to succeed. The Russian had treated the adventurous Japanese to some extremely heavy deliveries, however, from the monster weapons which formed the main part of her armament. The *Hashidate* gave back the fire, and in the end both fought themselves to a stand-still, without any decisive result. The *Chiyoda* had suffered extinction by the prowess of a first-class Russian cruiser, which carried far too great a number of guns and threw a far greater weight of metal than she could hope to compete with successfully.

She was soon perforated in a vital spot, and though she made a stubborn fight of it to the end, no prospect was entertained of saving her. She, too, went down with colours flying, and her commander summoned all hands on deck when she began to settle down finally, and gave them an opportunity to swim for it. But all he received for reply was a quite spontaneous attempt on the men's part to "fall in" as if on parade, signifying in an unmistakable way their wish to stick to the ship. For the moment the Russian ceased firing, and a few seconds later there rang out the note of a trumpet from the subsiding ship's deck, sounding the call-to-arms! Surely this was a gallant soul who with latest breath issued his challenge to the king of terrors!

But the catalogue of fearless deeds by no means ends here, for the crews of the Russian vessels which went under on that day of disaster met their deaths with equally unflinching fortitude, the stolid calm of the Muscovites being a strong contrast to the almost defiant

attitude in the presence of death evinced by the Japanese, but both betraying the same readiness to yield their lives in the service of their respective masters.

Darkness came on, and the scattered forces of the combatants became widely separated, the Russians making by common consent, as it seemed, for the northward, and their opponents steering south.

The Japanese were ignorant of the precise extent to which their foes had been damaged, but they were content with the success which had attended their efforts to prevent the Russian fleet making its way to the Yellow Sea, and though they were conscious that the result of this first passage of arms had not been the signal victory for them which they had hoped to obtain, they had not come off badly from the encounter. The injuries to the Russian fleet, indeed, were so serious that it became necessary for the remnant thereof to return to Vladivostock to repair and refit,

before it could venture to take to sea again. The flagship had been lost entirely, for though she survived the attack of the *Yashima*, she was so sadly damaged in her hull and her steering gear that when a gale sprang up, after the battle, she was without the means of making port, and succumbed to its fury. The six vessels which remained afloat were but a sorry remnant of a once formidable squadron. The storm increased, and the wind blew with almost typhoon severity. The Japanese which had been damaged had difficulty in making the harbour of Idzu-ga-hara, and for a time the *Suma* and *Tsukuba* were both missing. Late in the day a warship was sighted steaming in slowly from the north-east, and signals were made to her, in response to which she bore up for this shelter. She proved to be the *Suma*. Nothing could be ascertained regarding the whereabouts of the other ship, the *Tsukuba*, for fully forty-eight hours, when a signal was made from the temporary tele-

graph hulk on the west side of Tsushima that the lost man-of-war was then just entering the inlet.

She was there, safe, but not sound, for she had been separated from the rest of the fleet early in the action, and had been assailed by a cruiser which was exceptionally well handled by her commander—so much so, indeed, that in spite of every effort the *Tsukuba* could not get in a decisive blow, and had to occupy herself for the most part in keeping out of the way of the other's ram and torpedoes. It had been a true test of seamanship on both sides, and though darkness had put an end to the conflict, and the two ships lost sight of one another during the night, it was through no lack of spirit on either side that the battle was not renewed between them at daybreak. All this was telegraphed across to the admiral, who then ordered the *Tsukuba* to rejoin him on the east side of the island.

Though he had seven of his ten ships left,

he was not disposed to claim it as much of a victory. But he had demonstrated his ability to hold the foe in check, and had seriously damaged the naval prestige of Russia in the Far East.

CHAPTER IX

BRITAIN INSISTS ON OPEN PORTS

Chinese soldiery at Tientsin drilled by Japanese—A new lease of life for the Manchu dynasty—Abandonment of ideas of naval defence—Protection of Kiang-su by Great Britain—Britain insists on retention of northern treaty ports as open to trade of all nations—The Yangtse thrown open—Flourishing internal commerce of Hankow.

It did not demand a profound study of Asiatic politics to glean an inkling of the often but thinly-veiled ambitions of rival Powers in that extensive field denominated the Farthest East, and designs had been attributed to all the nations of Europe in turn, which, had they been accomplished, would have destroyed the existing equilibrium and plunged the civilized

world into a general conflict. At one moment we were told that Russia, France, and Germany were acting in concert, at another that Great Britain and Russia had a clear understanding, or that Russia, Japan, and Great Britain had formed a triple alliance to keep all the other Powers away. But whatever were the nature of the speculations indulged in, on one point there was a general consensus of opinion, and that was in regard to the stupendous effects which would be produced by a well-drilled Chinese army of such numerical strength as it would be an easy matter for a country possessing a population of three to four hundred millions to put into the field. The conclusion commonly reached was that such a force might repeat the successes of the Mongol leader, Genghis Khan, seven centuries before, though mere numbers, unless well armed, drilled, and equipped, and thoroughly disciplined, could effect but little.

It was conceivable, however, that as auxiliaries to an already well-organized and equipped

force, previously experienced in modern warfare, a numerous body of Chinamen might be capable of much. And the theory that a Chinese army might be "stiffened" by a liberal introduction of drilled regiments from Japan may not have been so far-fetched after all. For of late there had been a remarkable tendency exhibited by the Tsung-li-Yamun authorities toward a rigidity which was as novel as it was surprising. Could the determination of the Japanese Government, to offer a bold resistance to the advance of Russia in Korea, have been arrived at partly with the idea of infusing a spirit of resistance into the Chinese administration against the encroachments of Western nations? Did the action of the Tokio Government tend to create a diversion in China's favour? Had an understanding been arrived at, in the sense that it was equally in the interests of Japan and China to make an effort to arrest the southward march of Russia? Could the existence of such an agreement between China and Japan be regarded as

possible when we took into account the attitude of Great Britain in respect of both those countries, and her acknowledged readiness to co-operate when the objects to be attained were unselfish in character? Did not Japan, in compelling China to throw open Hangchau, Soochow, and Sha-shih to the trade of all nations, seeking no special benefit for herself, fully demonstrate to all the world that her policy in the East was directed by no bias toward exclusiveness, but aimed at the establishment of that free-trading intercourse which Great Britain declared should be the basis of any concessions exacted by force, or by diplomacy, from the Government of Peking? If these questions could have been answered in the affirmative we should have been warranted in taking into consideration the question of China's dismemberment from a standpoint different to that which was ordinarily assumed.

If the sense of a mutual danger should prove sufficient incentive to co-operation, the raw material for the formation of a vast

auxiliary force was to be found in abundance in the north of China. The Tientsin men, when efficiently organized into a battalion on a system akin to that adopted in the West, would probably turn out good soldiers. Lack of discipline, lack of qualified officers, and lack of efficient modern weapons in which they might place confidence, had all combined to bring about the crushing defeat which they had sustained at the hands of the splendidly-equipped army of Japan. The "banner-men" could have been trained, and would have been the nucleus of a strong force, but for official interference.

The history of Japan and China provided examples again and again of national jealousies culminating in actual warfare, on the cessation of which the bitterness of strife had given place to feelings of mutual esteem. It was not so long before that Chinese goods had been as highly prized in the Japanese household as the products of Europe and America had come to be appreciated by a later generation. There were many indications of a growing disposition to

sink past differences, and, on the part of China, to profit by the experience gained in recent years by her at one time *protégé*, in the arts of peace not less than those of war. Japan sought above all things the extension of her commerce, for upon the successful prosecution of her foreign trade depended her financial ability to carry out her various projects of advancement, at home and abroad. It was impossible for her to stand still, and equally impossible for China to do so, any longer. If China did not go forward, she could only fall back. The period of inaction had come to an end.

The Manchu dynasty, though it gave every indication of being moribund at the close of the war with Japan, had secured a new lease of life by proving strong enough to tide over the crisis in its affairs, brought about by the aggressive action of foreign Powers in search of territorial extension involving privileges more or less exclusive. It may well be that the Tsung-li-Yamun yielded to pressure in

the matter of Port Arthur's acquisition by the Tsar, in the hope of thereby avoiding a greater loss. If by submission to the excision of a finger or two she could have hoped to arrest the progress of a disease which threatened to consume all her extremities, it was a prudent course to follow. At all events it had been China's policy for a century past, it may be said, to bow to the inevitable in this fashion, and it had not produced disastrous results so far. But without some backing in the shape of material aid from Great Britain, for instance, or the co-operation of a growing nation like Japan, in some form calculated to strengthen her defences, the status of the present Peking Government could scarcely have been maintained for many years longer.

China had wisely, it would seem, abandoned any idea of reviving her naval power—so completely shattered by the actions of the Yalu and Wei-hai-wei. And if her maritime provinces were one by one to be lost to her, a navy was obviously a superfluity.

It had repeatedly been urged that the commerce of Great Britain with China amounted to so large a proportion of the whole foreign trade of the Celestial Empire that it was incumbent upon us to take steps to secure the retention of facilities for its unimpeded transaction, at all the ports where treaty rights existed. We had valuable interests to guard in this respect in the riverine and coast ports, and had once the principle of exclusive use of any harbour become established in favour of any one nation, a precedent would have been created for the appropriation of places specially adapted for use as naval stations, by Powers striving single-handed, or in combination, to secure exceptional advantages. So far we had fought against this exclusion successfully, whenever it had been attempted, and it had been laid down as a condition of the opening of any port in China, that it should be free of access to all. As we have already seen, Japan had plainly signified her adherence to this general principle, by insisting on the opening

of certain ports to all comers, and no real opposition to its acceptance was to be apprehended from any quarter. But it was possible that conditions might at some time or other arise under which it would be necessary for Great Britain to possess herself of certain existing ports in trust for international freedom of trade, and as the champion of commercial liberty. It might have been requisite, under such a state of things, that she should guarantee the accessibility of the Yangtse-kiang, by acquiring and holding in trust for China the region immediately north and south of the embouchure of that immense waterway to the interior. This would have entailed the occupation of some portions of the province of Kiang-su, and the ports therein situated, and it was perhaps fair to assume that should a general demand for the dismemberment of China spring up, Kiang-su would not without advantage come under the dominion of this country. Shanghai, for example, was to be preserved at all hazards as a port to which

the nations of the earth possessed equal rights of entry and trade. And the other centres of commerce in Kiang-su, numbering half-a-dozen at least, had to be kept free to all in observance of the same indisputable international right of access. In the extreme north there were the ports of Tientsin, Newchang, and Chefoo, to which freedom of entry had to be preserved, no matter into whose hands the provinces of Chih-li, Liao-tung, and Shantung might ultimately fall.

The agreement of Russia and Germany with Great Britain on this point was already assured by declarations made by both those Powers, and for the time being the political horizon was clear in that direction. But how long it would remain so depended in a great degree upon the action of Russia and Japan.

A curtailment of the boundaries of China proper might lead to the establishment of a central government at Hankow, six hundred miles up the Yangtse, and on the retention of the free navigation of the great river would

hang the continued existence of the Manchu rule. The flourishing trade of Hankow could only be retained by the preservation of an open channel to the sea, for ocean-going steamers, and the vital interests of all nations were concerned in this.

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CHAPTER X

BATTLE OF WANG-NEUN

Appropriation of a cable—Discovery and capture of the operator—A Russian bullet finds its billet—Conflict at Wang-Neun Pass—The fleet co-operates.

ALL is fair in love and war, according to the old proverb, and the use to which the Japanese put the submarine cable which nominally belonged to the Great Northern Telegraph Company, but which they suspected was in the main the property of Russian capitalists, was an instance of a free application of the maxim to the exigencies of modern warfare. This cable had been submerged many years before to connect the port of Nagasaki, in Japan, with Vladivostock, in the maritime province of

hang the continued been laid by a Danish vessel, rule. The flourishouts in the sea bed were perfectly only be retain to the hydrographical department open ch? Japanese navy. One of its surveying steamers had traced the course of the cable, and were latitude and longitude, over its entire length, were as clearly defined on the unpublished charts of the State as those of the minutest islet off the coast of Nihon. When war actually broke out it was determined that this cable should be turned to practical account, in a way that would hardly have been approved by its owners, and the method of doing so was as ingenious as it was unscrupulous. The route of the cable led within a short distance of a small island in mid-ocean which may be named Kuro-shima, a lonely speck in the expanse of the Japan Sea. The naval men at Tokio conceived the idea of making this a temporary telegraph station, and it was in the execution of this plan that the *Okinawa Maru* was occupied when reference was last made to her exploits. The possession of means of

almost instantaneous communication with their own capital thus provided gave to the Japanese no trifling advantages in the course of their operations in the peninsula. Lying close to the track of ships passing from Vladivostock to the southward, it formed a most serviceable look-out station, but its principal value was as an intermediate point from which to set up direct communication with the army destined to face the Russian forces in Korea. For the first task that the *Okinawa Maru* was set was the submersion of a light cable between this island and the mainland, thus providing the means of telegraphing direct from Tokio to the base of operations.

Protection had been afforded to the cable ship during the progress of the work by the presence of two warships, which cruised to the northward, prepared to give timely warning and assistance on an enemy's approach, but the Russian admiral was at Vladivostock, and the diversion of the cable was effected without mishap. Of course the electricians at the

Russian port knew that their cable had been broken or cut, but by a device of the Japanese engineer in charge of the work they were unable to "test for distance" of the breakage, which was made to appear to be much farther away than it really was. The island had been used as a look-out, and as an intermediate office for telegrams, for some time, when an event occurred which upset the calculations of the man in charge.

For in addition to gathering strength for the raid into Korean territory which the Japanese had been led to believe was imminent, the Russians had been trying in various ways to restore their telegraphic communications, and had fitted out a ship for the purpose of "under-running" the cable to the place of breakage, believing it to be somewhere in the open sea. An armed vessel was thus employed, and she had traced the course of the submerged line without making any discovery, until she arrived off Kuro-shima, at which point the suspicions of the Russian electricians were aroused. A

boat was lowered as the ship drew close to the island, and a pathway was discerned in the brushwood which led to a little hut, in which they found no less important a person than one of Japan's skilled telegraphists, Takasaki Genji, who hailed from Nagasaki, and had been told off to this hazardous duty. He was alone at the time, smoking his tiny pipe serenely, and it is difficult to say whether he was the most surprised, or his captors. At all events he was placed under guard, and the next move of his visitors was to signal false messages to the distant end of the wire. But here an unforeseen difficulty presented itself. The code in use was that for the Japanese native telegrams, and differs entirely from that known as the "universal Morse code" elsewhere employed. No one but Takasaki understood this Japanese code, which amounts practically to a native cypher, and so the Russian officers were compelled to have recourse to their captive for aid in signalling the projected delusive messages. Takasaki was made to comprehend by a vigor-

ous use of pantomimic action, what would be his fate if he refused to comply, but the youth was to all outward seeming in such a state of absolute terror that he was only too ready to do their bidding, irrespective of good or harm to his country, so that he might save his neck from the noose, though a close observer would have seen the ghost of a grimace cross the countenance of the prisoner, as he prepared to obey orders. But he at once gave the signal for the operator at the other end of the wire to write down the words which followed, and for the next five minutes he was, to all appearances, completely engrossed in carrying out the task laid upon him. It was fortunate for him that no ear but his own could appreciate the way in which he prefaced the despatch. It was in these words:—

"*Take no notice of what I am about to signal. It is all false news. The Russians are here, and hold me prisoner. I am sending you this message under compulsion. Wire*

it to Tokio War Department with my statement.—TAKASAKI GENJI."

Then calmly, and with no perceptible pause (for that might have told a tale), he went on with the misleading telegram, and in due course he received the answering signal:—

"*Quite comprehend. Will convey to War Department.*—CLERK IN CHARGE."

Having accomplished this neat stroke of business, as they fully supposed, the visitors placed the youth in charge of three marines, and returned to the ship, which still held the cable communicating with Vladivostock. In a few moments more they were laughingly informing the officials there of the result of their surprise visit to Takasaki's hut.

The night passed wearily for the captive, but toward dawn he observed a faint movement in the apparatus. Watching intently, he recognized that it spelt out some encouraging words:—

"*Do not trouble to answer. We hope your guards are asleep, and you are awake. Help will be with you soon. The admiral is at Bakan. Look to the southward tomorrow at daybreak.*"

Takasaki felt that he would like to shout "Banzai!" but prudence forbade him, and as his captors had been too drowsy to notice the minute flashes given out by the cable, he was not subjected to interrogation. Throughout the day the temporary cable-ship lay off the island in close commune with the authorities at Vladivostock.

Morning dawned once more upon the prisoner as he lay near the window, and sure enough he could see in the far south a streak of black smoke on the horizon. It was soon evident that the darkening cloud had not escaped the notice of the watch on board the Russian, for a cutter hurriedly pulled in from the cable-ship, with a file of marines aboard, to take off the guard and their captive. It was

hoped that by carrying him away they would render the use of the wire impossible to any one who might come after them. To make assurance doubly sure they smashed the apparatus. The instant they got to the ship, she took up her anchor, and steamed off to the north at her best speed. She was pretty nearly hull down by the time the Japanese admiral reached the island, but the officer whom he sent ashore quickly reported the state of affairs, and in a few minutes the fastest ship of the squadron was well away in pursuit.

Hand-over-hand she overhauled the slower vessel, and as they neared her the Japanese on the bridge saw a dark object mount the taffrail of the chase, and take a header therefrom into the green waters. They saw, also, that the swimmer was being fired at, and as a boat was lowered to the rescue, the captain of the cruiser shouted his command to the men at the oars to pull with all their strength, but they needed no encouragement to row this race for life.

The lad fainted as they lifted him into the cutter, and on examination it was found that he had been hard hit by a bullet fired from the Russian. He did not live long, but whispered to the officer who leaned over him as he lay on the cruiser's deck—"Tell them in Nagasaki how I fell—Teikoku—Teikoku"—and died as he lay.

The Japanese soon effected the capture of the imperfectly armed cable-ship, and sent her under the care of a prize crew to Matsuye, but they first took out of her the needed apparatus to which Takasaki had directed their attention. They found the man who shot the youth, but as he acted under orders they merely put him in irons until arrival at port. Communication was soon re-established with the mainland, for in the admiral's ship there was a marine who had gone through the telegraph course at barracks, and thus became of great service at a critical moment.

The first news they received was not agreeable, for they found that the land forces were

falling back before an overwhelming army of Russians advancing from the northern frontier. The latter might be expected in Port Lazareff before many days would elapse, unless something were interposed.

The admiral determined to abandon the station at Kuro-shima, which was now more of an embarrassment than a benefit; and he therefore had the cables permanently spliced, that the Korean shore and Nagasaki might be in direct communication. On reaching Gensan he found that the communication with the Japanese capital was perfect.

Having the military telegraph that had lately been set up as the army moved northward, for use in consultation, the naval and military commanders were soon able to elaborate a plan for joint action. Merely to act upon the defensive did not by any means satisfy the admiral's aspirations, and he assured his colleague that he might depend upon aid at the right instant. The army took up a naturally strong position at a spot fifty-four

miles north of Gensan, close to the shore, where the northern road narrows down to a mere strip of beach between precipitous cliffs and the ocean. Less than a mile inland is a mountain pass, by which all traffic with the south must be carried on, and capable of defence by even a small force. At this point much use may be made of the guns of a squadron co-operating parallel to the shore, and this fact was steadily kept in view by the Japanese commanders. The entire force available to resist the Russian advance did not exceed nine thousand men, and it was weak in cavalry. But there was good reason to think that the strength of the Japanese marshal's position in the pass of Wang-neun, fully compensated for any lack of mere numbers. He received a telegram from the admiral, assuring him of his speedy arrival to take part in the engagement.

Leaving the port of Gensan at daylight, the fleet passed slowly along the coast until it neared the little harbour of Shashakow, and

lay hidden from view, from a northerly direction, by the high land of Kanokyan.

The Russian army had approached to within eight miles of the pass, but was screened by an intervening ridge from direct inspection. The scouts continually brought in word, however, of the enemy's strength and position, and no one was surprised to learn that a considerable force had been detached from the main army, and sent away to the westward, on a mission the object of which it was tolerably easy to guess. It was an attempt to turn the Japanese position. The detached force was to make its way by a supposed gap in the mountain range, high up toward the source of the So-chin river. Thence it was to fall upon the Japanese flank whilst the main attack was being delivered from the northward.

Forewarned of this movement, the Japanese commander had no difficulty in making arrangements to frustrate it, and he despatched a thousand of his best troops to meet the foe half-way, and give him battle in the defile

through which he must pass to get to the west.

The enemy came in sight of a squadron of lancers exercising on the high land near the So-chin whilst it was yet early in the morning. The marshal was quickly apprised of the Russian strength, which was calculated to be not less than 15,000 of all arms, including artillery and Cossack cavalry.

By the expenditure of a vast amount of labour, the Japanese artillery had succeeded in dragging several serviceable guns not merely up to the pass, but to the elevated spurs on both sides of the gap, so that the track was commanded by the batteries in the passage and also by those on the slopes; the defenders were able to pour a considerable weight of metal upon any force which might have the temerity to storm the pass. Altogether there were thirty-six cannon in position, and an equal number in reserve, in the rear, held in readiness in the event of the first line being driven back by the Russian attack. It was

practically impossible for the enemy to get past the gap in the face of the fire which could be concentrated upon it from this reserve. But the marshal had still a trump card in his hand, for the fleet was assisting, and would be certain to appear at the critical moment.

The next morning, just as the first streak of dawn became visible seaward, the Japanese vedettes espied a compact grey mass moving slowly across the intervening stretch of comparatively level ground, which lay between the distant ridge and the Wang-neun Pass. This was composed of the Russian advance-guard, and it was speedily followed by regiment after regiment, the general effect, as daylight grew, being to magnify, if anything, the formidable dimensions of the assaulting column, in the estimation of the defenders.

By nine a.m. the attack was in progress in full earnest, and a most determined effort was being made to force back the sturdy wielders of the deadly Murata magazine rifle. Line upon line of the slain demonstrated the ac-

curacy of the fire, and the destructive precision of this Japanese-made weapon. The defenders were advantageously posted on the rising ground, and fired volleys in rapid succession as the Cossacks were hurled to the assault. Hundreds of empty saddles testified, as the assailants retired discomfited from every attempt, to the accuracy and steady persistency of the rifle discharges, but for two hours the Russian commander persevered in his efforts to break through, marvelling not a little at the inappreciable effect of his own men's fire. He did not know, then, that for every man whom his shells or bullets took down there was ever at hand another ready to step into the vacant place, and that in this way the hail of bullets from his foes never perceptibly slackened. The defending side in reality lost very heavily, but they had the immense advantage of position, and gallantly held their ground.

At a little after eleven a sudden movement was apparent among the Russian main body, the origin of which, owing to the inequalities

of the ground, was not clearly discernible at first, though perfectly comprehended by the Japanese marshal, who had watched the progress of the struggle from an eminence slightly to the rear.

"Gunkan tsuita!" he confidently declared to an *aide-de-camp;* "kesh'te kita!" he insisted.

And he was right. The admiral had steamed in at the nick of time, from his anchorage at Kanokyan, to that between the island and the coast, and with his long-range guns was cutting off the retreat of the already partly demoralized army of the north. In another hour it would have been caught between two fires, and would have had to surrender or be annihilated. But having realized the peril on the instant of its development, the entire body now commenced to retire by the way it had come, and the warships prepared to follow on a course parallel to the shore, in pursuit.

In the journey across the plain the retreating men were much harassed by the fire of the Japanese, who had now, in their turn,

become the aggressive force, and it was not until the friendly refuge of the hills beyond the ridge had been reached, that the fire of the ships failed to pursue them. The Japanese were weak in cavalry, as we know, and it was not practicable for them to reap the full benefit of their victory, but it was not until the last grey coat had vanished in the direction of the border that the chase entirely ended. At the close of the fighting in the pass, the marshal had despatched a regiment to the westward in support of those troops whom he had sent before to frustrate the attempted turning movement high up the So-chin river, but progress was necessarily slow. In the meanwhile the corps first sent off to meet the Russians had come in contact with them, and not only had checked their advance, but had prevailed upon them to return to the main army, or such fragments of it which remained after Wang-neun. Thus when the reinforcements arrived all the work had been done.

Telegraphic news does not take long to

spread, and the fact of the Mikado's forces being in possession of the whole of Northern Korea diffused itself with the speed of lightning. Vladivostock soon had the word, and the authorities were chagrined to reflect that the Russian fleet was absolutely at its nadir, in respect of fighting capacity, for its few remaining vessels were in dock, and would not be fit to go to sea for months to come.

The Japanese posted a strong garrison on the frontier, at the point where alone it is practicable to make a descent upon Cho-Sen from the direction of Vladivostock by land. A still more powerful contingent was left in charge of Gensan—the Port Lazareff of the Russians—and the squadron continued to patrol the Sea of Japan to ensure that no fresh importation of troops might take place by water. Guns were landed and placed in position at various points on the coast, and all arrangements made for adequate defence, against the day when the Tsar's obligations elsewhere might leave him with hands free to undertake

further operations in connection with the Far Eastern question.

It was felt that there would be a short respite in any case, and before hostilities could be resumed it was not improbable that the other European Powers would use their friendly endeavours to put an end to a strife so prejudicial to the best interests of the dwellers in that portion of the globe.

CHAPTER XI

GENERAL TRADE WITH JAPAN

The relative position of Powers in the Far East—Japan's mission—Opening of the Japanese empire to general trade—Feeling of the lower classes—Return to excellence of manufacture.

It had been with no little surprise that Europe had witnessed the progress of the struggle between the Colossus of the North and its comparatively puny antagonist Japan. From time to time the journals of the Western capitals had directed attention to the extraordinary defensive and offensive preparations which were being made by the Government of Tokio. But beyond these occasional observations there seemed to have been no decided effort made

to obtain an accurate idea of Japan's real strength, so that when it was actually exhibited in conflict with one of the Great Powers, people whose tastes or avocations had not led them to make a study of Japanese affairs, were amazed to discover that "the Great Britain of the Far East" had, in so short a time as it seemed, acquired an unmistakable right to be regarded as a vital force in Asiatic politics.

That phase which most attracted the admiration of spectators of the combat was the consummate ease with which the island Power had been able, by a skilful concentration of all its energies, to repel an advance which had previously, in the case of Asiatic nations, proved to be altogether irresistible. Of course the problem at no time had presented itself for solution,—could Japan contend successfully with all the forces of all the Russias?—but could she offer adequate resistance to such a proportion of those forces as the Government of St. Petersburg could afford to detach for service in the Extreme Orient, having regard

to possible complications nearer home, which might at any time demand the exercise of the utmost strength that even Russia, with all her millions, would be able to collect at one spot? As the result amply proved, not only could Japan hold her own, but she was capable of inflicting severe losses upon an enemy who might come unprepared with fuel, a commodity which may in these days be esteemed as "the sinews of war" in a stricter sense than money, for it is possible for a nation to be exceedingly wealthy, and yet unable to purchase coal to keep the furnaces of its fleet going.

A Russian war would have been a far more serious undertaking for Japan had it been delayed until after the completion of the Trans-Siberian Railway, for Russia would have been enabled to pour hordes of Cossacks, and immense numbers of infantry and artillery, into Vladivostock, by aid of the trains, and thence over the border into Korea, sufficient to sweep into the sea even the large army which Japan was able to install there.

It was likewise evident that although Japan had had settlements in Korea for many years, that fact would have weighed but little with the administrators which it was part of Russia's policy to force upon the king of that unprogressive country. The Japanese residents had long regarded the prospect with dismay, and felt that the day was fast approaching when they would be driven out. The Japanese had fully appreciated at the time of the Shimonoseki Treaty the effect of the interference of Russia, in conjunction with France and Germany, to rob them of the fruits of victory in the hour when not only Korea, but all South Manchuria, lay at their feet. Great Britain had had no share in that—to them—unholy compact, and they were proportionately grateful. They would have been more thankful still, perhaps, if it had been possible for Britain to have stepped in and insisted that no such injustice should be perpetrated. They understood, however, that though Britain was prepared to give Japan her moral support, she could not go the

length of engaging the other Powers of the Continent in war on her account. So Japan had waited her opportunity, and at last she had stepped out stoutly and fought for what had all along been held by her own people (and perhaps by others) to be her right.

But the moral effect of Japan's success was even more to be seen in another way, wholly apart from her status as a naval or military Power.

When by the abolition of extra-territorial rights, under the new treaty of 1894, all foreign residents in Japan were made subject—after 1899—to Japanese law, and correspondingly, from that date, the country was to be thrown open to the trade of all nations, there were not a few persons who cherished the idea that upon the abrogation of the existing treaties they would be subject to a form of persecution, at the hands of the official class, which would be tantamount to an effort to expel foreigners altogether. It seemed to be taken for granted that immediately foreign residents ceased to

have a right to appeal to their own countries' laws, they would become the victims of an oppression which would render residence in the Land of the Rising Sun an impossibility.

If it was pointed out that as a great and growing nation Japan had a right to frame its own edicts, so far, at all events, as there might be no transgression of the bounds fixed for civilized peoples by the accepted doctrines of international law, and that when visitors take up their stay in a country which is not under their own flag they must be ready to bow to that country's code of regulations, the objectors would urge that Japan had so far done nothing to constitute a just claim to be regarded as other than a third or fourth-rate Power, inasmuch as her victory over the Chinese had been a hollow affair—a foregone conclusion — counting little or nothing to Japan's credit. Some there were, indeed, who scrupled not to assert that the result of the campaign had been brought about mainly by

a free distribution among the mandarins of Japanese gold!

But now an effective stop had been put to these cavilling and puerile remonstrances, for it could no longer be contended that in proving her ability to defend herself against a first-class Power Japan had not, and in the most emphatic manner, vindicated her right to be treated with respect by peoples and Powers alike.

The immediate result was a better understanding between native and foreign residents, which began to show itself in all their relations, for the moment the Japanese were able to recognize that Europeans were willing to treat them as men, and no longer as children, the naturally well-disposed feeling of the citizens towards foreigners had free scope.

The most cordial good-feeling has for years past animated all the relations of the Japanese with the English-speaking peoples of both hemispheres, proof of which, were it needed, might be found in the supreme care taken to

give the pupils in all schools in Japan a thorough grounding in English. American and English text-books are to be found in every class-room, though the study of other foreign tongues is by no means neglected. In point of diversity of study, indeed, and in aptitude in applying his learning, and turning it immediately to account, perhaps the youth of Japan at present is second to no student in the world.

Of course when it became known to the Japanese citizens that the extra-territoriality clauses of the old treaties had finally been disposed of, under the new agreements made with Western nations, there was a not altogether unnatural jubilation exhibited by the people of the lower classes on the occasion—as they deemed it—of their deliverance from a thraldom which had held Japan in check for thirty years, had prevented her from asserting herself in the way her prowess and ability entitled her to do, and had retarded all her efforts at real advancement. All this, and

much more, had been urged by the professional agitator with most pernicious effect in the later years of the century, and when the new law was made known the revulsion of feeling was so great, with some, that unreasoning folk were prone to display a vast amount of pride in their emancipation, and an astounding degree of self-sufficiency which, to foreign residents, was occasionally manifested in an alarming form.

To those who knew the innate good temper and common sense of the Japanese people, however, there never at any time seemed to be serious ground for perturbation of spirit. The ebullition was almost a natural consequence of the withdrawal of a pressure which had been felt a good deal more than the casual visitor could ever have been cognizant of.

It was said at one time that no foreign woman was safe from insult in the public streets of the ports; but this was obviously an exaggeration, and though the rowdy element made itself most obnoxious, no doubt, it is question-

able if any genuinely authenticated case of violence was ever brought to light. But the attitude of the lower orders toward foreigners was that of extreme independence, and it was often said that the victories gained over China for a time made a nation of braggarts and fire-eaters of a people who had previously been distinguished by modest confidence in their own strength. As in the other story, there no doubt were grains of truth in the accusation, but it scarcely merited consideration.

To an unbiased mind, indeed, there had been a generous appreciation of a fallen foe in the conduct of Japan in its dealings with China since the war, which goes far to explain the manner in which the way was paved for that mutual stand against foreign aggression which was calculated to be productive of such unlooked-for and stupendous results.

On the other hand, the war with China had a certain salutary action upon the conquerors which was scarcely to have been foreseen, and in quite another direction. For a

temporary suspension took place in the output of shoddy goods destined for the foreign markets, through the draft of labourers to the seat of war having compelled many of the producers to forfeit their contracts, for lack of the class of labour which alone would have enabled the work to be carried out at the low figures quoted. It paid no longer to turn out such stuff, and the absence of supply sent up the prices—when a strong demand arose after the war for goods from Japan—to a level at which a fair margin of profit remained, after putting better material and workmanship into the articles for sale. The inducement no longer existed to embark in enterprises of this doubtful character, and a return to the former excellence and refined taste of Japanese work was thus guaranteed. The Government had so impressed upon the people the necessity of restoring and preserving the commercial integrity of their country, by resisting the temptations placed in their path to turn out low-class goods, and by avoiding undertakings

which they might subsequently be unable or disinclined to carry out in their entirety, that there was every encouragement to hope that substantial reform in this matter might shortly become evident.

A feature of Japanese industrial life, in which China and its future were likewise concerned, had been the low rate of wages hitherto obtaining. The Japanese Government having had to go to war to defend its prestige, a demand for labourers of the unskilled type had arisen, which enabled the men to hold out for higher pay. And after the war had ceased the same classes had been unwilling to accept the old rate of wages, so that labour troubles had been added to the innovations of the period of Meiji. As, however, these were firmly and successfully dealt with, no important injury accrued, and it is not to be expected that an organized strike of Japanese will ever assume the proportions or attain the intensity which such combined action acquires in Western lands.

CHAPTER XII

A WAR OF COMMERCE

How Japan urges China forward—Progress of Osaka—Cotton-spinning — Railways — Ship-building — Silk-weaving—Scientific apparatus—Kerosene oil—Tea—Speed of travel—Electric light.

If, as we have already had reason to think may have been the case, the sudden "stiffening" observable in China's attitude was directly to be traced to an agreement with Japan to resist further encroachments from without, it must be acknowledged that Japan's embarkation upon a line of policy which had given to her a certain status, and an acknowledged power on land and sea, had not been without its influence upon the Celestial mind. At the outset, a

quarter of a century ago, China affected to be amused at the idea of a nation like the Japanese taking lessons from Europe and America in the arts and sciences. If Japan had made good use of her opportunities when she was under Chinese tuition, thought the followers of Confucius, she would never have had need of further instruction from any source whatever, and they smiled at the idea of her so wasting her time as to go to school again, as it were. But gradually it dawned upon the more enlightened among the Sons of Han that there might be some ground for Japan's evident belief in the efficacy of the methods she was then adopting. This impression, slight as it was at first, was deepened into conviction towards the close of the year 1894, and the disposition to ridicule gave place to that of cautious inquiry. To what extent the official classes had profited by their observations of Japan's progress it would be impossible to say, but when we call to mind some of the channels in which Japanese enterprise had been

conspicuously active, it can hardly be doubted that—sound men of business as the Chinese unquestionably are—the trading classes had made mental note of those innovations which had yielded the most satisfactory results.

Take, for example, Japan's success in cotton-spinning and silk-weaving. Can it be imagined that the Chinamen were ignorant of the substantial dividends paid to shareholders in the many limited liability concerns, which had been in operation for years, in all the central provinces of Japan? Could they have failed to appreciate the work she had accomplished in ship-building, or in the production of rolling stock for the fast-growing railway system?

In the period which had immediately succeeded the war of 1894-5, Japan had not only paid attention to the obvious duty of perfecting her military and naval arrangements, and of preparing for war again as the most direct way of securing peace for a spell, but she had evinced abundant enterprise in those fields of labour which promised to render an adequate

return for capital invested. The Mikado's subjects were not so enamoured of their position at the close of the campaign as to imagine that they might neglect any opportunity, however slight, of improving and consolidating their commercial as well as naval and military power. They realized that they had a war of trade to wage with the countries of the West, in which success or failure meant everything to Japan, and they set themselves vigorously to work to compass their ends in their own way. As an indication of the rapid advance made in arts and manufactures, it may be mentioned that in 1872 the tall chimney erected at the Mint, in the suburbs of Osaka, was the only factory chimney in that flourishing centre of industry, but by the end of 1888 the number of such chimneys had increased to upwards of one hundred, whilst at the close of the century the total exceeded three hundred. Osaka had become the Manchester of the Far East. She supplied Hong Kong, China, India, and the United States to a very appreciable

extent with cotton twills, and sent cotton flannels in quantities to India, Korea, China, and Siberia. To Korea she sent considerable quantities of white and black calicoes, and figured cotton cloth. Japan's perfect acquaintance with the requirements of Oriental peoples —combining, as she may be said to do, all the characteristics and tastes of an Eastern nation with the arts and sciences, and perhaps some of the proclivities, of the peoples of the West—inevitably fitted her for the task of ministering to the peculiar needs of the neighbouring population with which she had, for centuries past, been in more or less close touch.

Cotton spinning and weaving had been carried on in the Japanese Manchester since 1885, and much of the raw material had been imported from the British possessions in India, where the cotton plant can be grown to immense advantage, but where, despite the cheapness of labour, such heavy expenses are entailed in supervision and in other

ways, that the cost of production of yarn or finished goods is higher than in Japan. If it should prove practicable to raise in the fields of Central and Southern Japan the American variety of cotton plant, the disadvantage under which the local manufacturers exist, of being unable to turn out the higher counts of yarn, may be removed. As matters stand the fibre of the native-grown cotton, as also that of China, is unfit for the purpose of producing the finer grades of cotton, and great quantities are still imported for use in the Osaka looms. Up to the size known as 20's the Asiatic variety of the plant answers perfectly, but for sizes ranging numerically above that figure the American plant alone seems to suit.

Japan is now in a position to armour her own warships, for steel is being produced of fine quality, and she can roll plates of the kind needed, so that she is now practically independent of the West for her navy. A vast amount of good work has already been done at Japanese dockyards, and battle-ships

are now being constructed. The Yokosuka cruisers had given every satisfaction, and China must have made a special note of the fact. Whether it would lead to the revivification of the arsenal at Foochow, and stimulate the authorities to the output of larger vessels than hitherto had been turned out at that promising depôt, was a problem unsolved.

Marine engines in the last decade of the nineteenth century were wholly constructed at several of the ironworks which had been established at various places, particularly at Nagasaki. All the castings in metal requisite in the numerous fields of industry in which Japan was engaged were made at local foundries, the patterns all being the work of native handicraftsmen.

At the Nagasaki works a ship of 5,800 tons had to be completed under contract every year for the Nippon Yu-Sen Kaisha (Japan Mail-boat Company), to be employed on the European or colonial service.

Ship-building had been fostered by the policy

of the Government to such a degree that a dozen yards were in full work and launching commendable specimens of naval architecture. For the native engineers were being supervised by skilled architects whom the builders had the good sense to engage in foreign lands—realizing, no doubt, that at the first stage of their undertaking they needed all the competent advice that was obtainable. In due time in this, as in other things, they may improve upon the design, for it is a libel to assert that the Japanese are merely able to copy —they have in many of their productions shown an advance upon the original article which they took for their guide.

Among other ventures which Japan had made into the manufacturing arena, she had imported wool from the Australian colonies, and from it had made blankets, and other woollen goods, thus reducing her imports, and had supplied some of these articles to Korea. She had obtained hides from Australia also, and had prepared the leather, worked it up into boots

and shoes, and sent them to the Australian market, to the surprise of those who were not in the secret of her phenomenally cheap labour —viz. cheap living.

The raw cotton brought from India had been spun in the Osaka mills in Japan, and sold to firms in China at paying rates, thus competing with the Chinese-owned factories—not a little to the Celestials' astonishment! Only the excessively low wages paid for female labour had permitted of this exploit in competitive trade.

As to Japanese silks, they were as well known as the products of the West, and the raw silk was largely exported from Japan for the purpose of manufacture according to Occidental taste and designs, in the looms of Europe.

In the department of safety matches the palm was borne off from all competitors, in the Orient, by Japan, and the export of Japanese matches to the Straits Settlements, India, China, and all the countries of Asia was something enormous. They equalled the

productions of Sweden, and were sold at a price which defied competition. The Chinese had joined in the effort to oust the matches of the West, and Hong Kong was famous for the variety of its matchbox labels, the collection of which at one time threatened to become as much a matter of interest as the formation of stamp-albums elsewhere.

It would be tedious to enumerate all the fields of commercial enterprise into which the spirit of emulation had led the subjects of the Ten-Shi. In wearing apparel, in house furniture, in preserved provisions—fish, and vegetables,—in the manufacture of scientific apparatus—dental, surgical, and electrical,—in bicycles and tricycles, clocks and watches, copper-wire of great metallic purity, straw-plait in competition with Luton, muslin-weaving and other machinery, the exportation of timber for various purposes, and the manufacture of kerosene oil from a crude found in Echigo—to say nought of better-known exports of the country in the shape of tea

to America and Russia, and coal to the ports of Asia—in all these multifarious departments of commercial adventure she had plunged with a zeal and enthusiasm which were the more remarkable because for the most part altogether unexpected.

Japanese merchants had even started a company to promote steam towage in China, on the interior waterways, and they were quite prepared to begin cotton-spinning at the open treaty ports, thus tackling the Chinese on their own ground, but for a Customs restriction which prevented the projected mills receiving the raw material save at a heavy impost on importation.

One bold individual had the hardihood to carry out a scheme for selling to the Chinese a good cooking oil expressed from cotton-seed.

He was so successful that the authorities took fright, and issued a notification that this "pure refined oil" must not be used. They declared it to be injurious to health. The

fact was that the refined product was so strikingly superior to the discoloured and sticky stuff ordinarily placed in Chinese kitchens, that the new oil bade fair to run the old off the field completely.

Information of the foregoing description may seem to have but little bearing upon the subject at issue, until it is recalled to memory that from the first the Japanese nation, or rather its Government, had to contend with a paucity of that commodity which large and small communities are alike unable to dispense with, under existing conditions of life. Japan had periodical need of ready money, and in order that she should be able to procure that money on the most favourable terms it was essential that she should prove that her financial position, in respect of trade, was relatively sound and substantial. To effect this she had to seek every possible means of developing her foreign commerce, and how well the end was attained we have already seen, though she could not afford to neglect

the simultaneous extension of her railways, for without them her internal resources would have remained untapped. It was in respect ot this wise determination to open up her provinces by means of railway communication that she was held up as an example of what the system might accomplish, to the Tsung-li-Yamun many years ago, when Li Hung Chang and two other Chinese notables petitioned the Peking Government to introduce railways into China, as a means of saving the nation from the fangs of the "wild creatures sitting around, awaiting their time to tear her limb from limb." And Japan had provided herself with a railway from the extreme north to the extreme south—not quite complete, but nearly so — which measures, with its branches, close upon three thousand miles. More than another thousand miles of line were under construction. Only six hundred miles were State property, but the net profit thereupon was set down in the Budget at half-a-million sterling.

The engineering difficulties to be overcome were considerable. For example, on the way from Tokio to the west coast the railway crosses the Usui Pass, at an altitude above sea-level of 2,600 feet. In five miles the rise is 1,830 feet, and a rack-rail is employed on the German principle. The gradient is as high as one in fifteen, and it is noteworthy that the work was carried through by Japanese engineers without a hitch, and that the line answered all expectations. The tunnels on the Japan railways are numerous, if not of great length, and iron bridges are met with everywhere, for the rivers are turbulent in the rainy season, though their beds may be nearly dry at other times. One bridge is 4000 feet in length. Thirty years earlier it was only possible to travel in sedan-chairs, at a walking pace, or on pack-horses, which likewise walked. Apart from the dignity of the thing, there was little to be gained from submitting to be carried in a sedan, and a journey which, up to 1873, would have occupied from six to

eight weeks, could be accomplished in a couple of days, and at a cost for fares which was one-fourth of the third-class fare in Great Britain. The speed was low, but then there was no demand for rapidity of transport. People in Japan took life more leisurely than ourselves. The narrowness of the gauge, moreover, tended to moderation in pace, and eighteen miles an hour was about the average. So it was in India, if we include stoppages. In India we used a metre or a 5′ 6″ gauge; in Japan it was 3′ 6″ only, throughout. Whether Japan would have been better off with a wider gauge need not be considered, for the system as it stood was capable of very useful work in an emergency, and undoubtedly rewarded the investors in this class of undertaking who dwelt in the Mikado's dominions.

Electric railways were also finding favour, and Kodzu station on the Tokio railway was the terminus of an electric line which conveyed passengers up to the base of the Hakone Hills, and the Seven Mineral Springs of that

region, so well known to the tourist. Electric lights adorned the streets of the Japanese capital, and electricity was the motive power which propelled its tramcars.

CHAPTER XIII

CHINA MOVES SLOWLY

Japan divined Russia's true policy—The ice-free port theory—German occupation of Shantung—Japan and China bound by ties of friendship.

TOWARD the end of the century no study could have proved more attractive than that of Farther Asian politics, for in that quarter of the globe the little cloud was gathering which threatened to be followed by a typhoon in which kingdoms and empires might be wrecked. That a storm would arise suddenly some day was the general belief, and only those who navigated with profound knowledge of the political law of storms, so to put it, could have hoped to carry their precious charges safely into port.

"What will Japan do?" was a question which received many answers, but the problem was finally solved only when she began to act for herself. That she would adopt a course certain to have the cordial approval of Great Britain was beyond doubt, though it was not feasible for open declaration of such unity of purpose to be made either in London or Tokio. The Japanese Cabinet had never failed to divine the true motive of Russia's advance toward Korea. The plea of wanting an ice-free port was not of itself sufficient to account for the earth-hunger which it was fully understood prompted the great northern power to "seek an outlet to the south." Had harbour accommodation been the one thing needful, there was the precedent of Nagasaki to fall back upon for an indication that it might have been practicable to acquire such accommodation in a way which would not have entailed the absorption of the entire Korean peninsula. In Nagasaki harbour Russian ships could stay as long as they

pleased, winter and summer, and Russians were at liberty to manage the town on the west side of the inlet, known as the Russian village, in pretty much their own way. There they had Russian inns, Russian vapour baths, Russian *cafés*, and but for form's sake they might have hoisted the Russian flag. They coaled their vessels there, and took in provisions. Their ships passed in and out of harbour, and beyond recording arrivals and departures, but little notice was taken of their proceedings by the authorities of the port. As there was a settlement at Fusan and another at Gensan, in Korea, it would appear to have been quite at their discretion to make as free use of either of those ports (and Fusan, at all events, is ice-free) as they had for many years past made of Nagasaki.

Similarly, it would have been possible for Germany to have exacted compensation for the families of the murdered missionaries without going to the length of invading Chinese territory at Kiao-chau, and establish-

ing the nucleus of a naval depôt on the property of a friendly Power. It is safe to say that it would not have been done had that Power been Japan. Moreover, the stipulation that a memorial church should be erected at Tsi-ning-chau must have given much anxiety to the Peking Government, for it was close to this city that the sage Confucius (as we know him, but Kung Fu-tsu as he is known to the Chinese) lived and died. His almost equally celebrated follower on the stage of Chinese history—Mencius, *i. e.* Meng Fu-tsu—belonged to the town of Tsau-chau, only a few miles away, and within the boundaries of this same province of Shantung. To contemplate the building of a Christian church on the spot hallowed by traditions of the great law-giver, must have been in no slight measure repugnant to native feeling, and it was not unlikely that the progress of the work would be attended by popular excitement in a marked degree. Confucius died in 478 B.C., so that the town boasted a hoary

antiquity, but the city of Tsi-nan Fu, to which it was proposed by the German occupiers of Kiao-chau to run a line of railway, situated a little to the north of Confucius' birthplace, dated from 1100 B.C.

If the principle could have been accepted as just, that the partition of China was indispensable on account of her lethargic condition, and that, because she would not move forward, her lands were to be divided among nations which might claim to be in the van of progress, we might have looked for a descent upon the province of Chih-li, in which lay the Chinese capital. Chih-li possessed not a few attractions for a ruler afflicted with earth-hunger. Like Shantung, it had good store of coal, and also iron and silver. Almost any kind of corn, except rice, could be grown,—wheat, oats, barley, maize, and millet, and abundance of potatoes, beans, and peas were found everywhere on the plains. Fruit was plentiful, and the twenty-seven millions of its inhabitants would have been content,

perhaps, if a change of rulers had brought them untaxed salt. This commodity was so highly prized that on both banks of the Pei-ho leading to Tientsin there were immense stacks of it, which the poor people could not touch until the tax upon it had been paid. Thus it had come about that one of the articles which Chih-li imported was sea-weed, from the north of Japan, so that in the interior when salt could not be procured strips of the weed might be boiled down, and the precious condiment extracted by the consumer. And the hard-working classes who thus had to debar themselves of one of the bare necessaries of life, knew well that the monopoly was held by the mandarins, and that the tax which they had to pay, when they could afford to pay it at all, went to swell the purse of their provincial Government. The temptation to annex or temporarily occupy this territory of great promise must have been well-nigh irresistible to any Power which had a wrong to avenge.

Nevertheless it was doubtful, to say the least, if the hour of China's complete disintegration was at hand. Circumstances pointed to the continuation of her cumbrous system of government for decades to come, though it was highly probable that portions of her maritime provinces would be appropriated from time to time, as opportunities might offer. It had passed into a proverb that whenever the mighty mass came to be seriously disturbed in its position, it would be as the result of an upheaval from within, not by any pressure from without. At one time it was supposed that a partial rejuvenation might be apprehended, so important to China was the institution of the Imperial Penny Post, or its Chinese equivalent. The cotton-spinning industry, exploited so successfully by Japan, threatened to take root in Shanghai, and at other coast ports. Silk-weaving was to be carried on by foreign machinery on a grand scale. And, above all things, railways were to be freely constructed, to open up the

remotest corners of the vast empire. But the process was a slow one, and the real advance made could only be discerned after careful search. Still, even these minute traces of a forward movement were encouraging, and whilst there were not wanting proofs that more than one nation deserved the credit of instigating the Peking Government to abnormal activity, it is quite likely that this was a case in which example had been more potent than precept—the undeniable success of her neighbour in her entry into the field of Western competition having driven the lesson home that enterprise paid well, while stagnation did not.

Long before—very long before—as it seemed, considering the rate at which Japan had marched, a treaty had been entered into between Japan and China which contained this clause (it was only in 1871)—

"Friendly intercourse thus existing between the two Governments, it is the duty of each to sympathize with the other, and in the event of any other nation acting unjustly, or treating

either of the two Powers with contempt, on notice being given (by the one to the other) mutual assistance shall be rendered, or mediation offered for the arrangement of the difficulty, in fulfilment of the duty imposed by relations of friendship."

Was it impossible that the later relations between the two Powers were in some measure based upon this old-standing agreement? Had China called upon Japan privately for her assistance in repelling the unjust action of other Powers? As for sympathy, there could scarcely be a question that Japan most thoroughly appreciated the nature of the coercion under which China lay prostrate, for had she not experienced herself what it meant to be compelled to bow to the force of a triple combination of the Powers herself?

The policy of Marquis Ito's government in Tokio had always been "Japan for the Japanese," just as Li Hung Chang's at Peking had been "China for the Chinamen," and with both these statesmen once more hold-

ing positions of almost paramount influence in the Governments of their respective countries, it was certain that they would seek by all legitimate means to give effect to their views. There was no likelihood that the "strong foreign policy," as it was termed by the Tokio politicians, would suffer any relaxation at the hands of those at the helm. Nor, could the Earl Li have had his own way at the Chinese capital, would any expectations have been warranted, of the speedy dismemberment of China.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FUTURE OF THE FAR EAST

Korea under the Mikado's rule—Financial status of Japan—Great Britain's influence—The limitation of Asiatic wars—Conclusion.

If an observer could have looked into the future, he would, in the following century, have seen Korea being governed according to Japanese lights, and regarded as a vassal kingdom, notwithstanding the objection of the deposed monarch to be addressed by any lower title than that of emperor. The Chinese written character for "emperor" is composed of two symbols, which, taken separately, mean "white" and "ruler," and it

would be interesting to know what significance, in the Celestial's profound respect for omens, is attached to this portentous combination. Chinese characters are also used in Korea, and in their familiarity with the meaning of them the subjects of the Emperor Li-Hsi may have thought, with Russia at their doors, that his Majesty might have done wisely to hold to his title of king. The "white ruler" of which the nations of Asia had most knowledge was he who ruled at St. Petersburg. The twentieth century found the Korean emperor an honoured guest at Tokio, whilst his son was occupying the throne at Seoul as the living representative of the Mikado. The perils and anxieties of monarchical sway in Korea had weighed heavily on the previous ruler, and from one cause and another he had had especial reason to appreciate the force of that oft-quoted assertion of the Occidental dramatist of whose works his Majesty had doubtless heard—

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

He found congenial occupation in visiting the parks and pleasure-grounds of the imperial residence in the Japanese capital, or in viewing the kaleidoscopic changes of the Tokio thoroughfares.

A judicial system free from the taint of corruption which disfigured the old Korean administration was one of those benefits which the twentieth century had in store for the Land of Morning Calm, and good order was restored among the peasantry. All that had tended to successful government in Japan had been introduced into the management of affairs at Seoul. The railway system recently inaugurated was extended and perfected. An adequate force of native *gens-d'armes* had been established for the preservation of peace. With their usual readiness to seize opportunities for trading advantageously, the restoration of sound control brought thousands of Japanese settlers to the peninsula, for Korean soil was rich enough, and the country was large enough to support a greater population,

and its proximity to the Mikado's realms had at all times caused it to be favourably regarded as an outlet for the growing overplus of Japan.

As the nineteenth century approached its close, the oft-told tale was more frequently heard than ever that Japan was destined to fall into national bankruptcy, because, as had been persistently asserted of her at any time the last twenty-five years, she had "been going ahead far too fast." By the Japanese themselves these comments upon their financial status were accepted with equanimity, and the confidence which was generally placed in the Government by the subjects of the Japanese emperor was shown to be warranted. For, taking the year 1903 as a basis of calculation—by which time all the extraordinary expenditure upon armaments previously agreed upon had been met (it was spread over a term of years)—it was found that the estimated income amounted to—

Ordinary Revenue	yen 127,500,000
Customs increase	7,590,000
Increased taxation	33,000,000
Revenue from Formosa	8,500,000
Revenue from State Industries and other sources	3,125,000
Total ...	179,715,000

And the estimated expenditure was—

Army	yen 32,000,000
Navy	25,500,000
Supplementary for Army ...	11,000,000
Public debt, interest, and sinking fund, including debts incurred in colonizing the islands of Yeso and Formosa	43,500,000
Expenditure on State Works and Enterprises — roads, telegraphs, telephones, aids to ship-building and navigation, education, land reclamation, irrigation, grants to various industries, etc.	56,715,000
Formosan expenditure	11,000,000
Total ...	179,715,000

It may not be out of place here to quote the estimated volume of trade for the same fiscal year, as indicative of the immense commercial progress which had been made by Japan.

Imports	... ...	yen 252,750,000
Exports	... ...	282,080,000
	Total ...	534,830,000

Great Britain's portion of this trade amounted to forty per cent. of the whole (this included Greater Britain). That of the United States was twenty-two per cent., France shared to the extent of ten per cent., and Germany about the same (for German trade had been extended greatly), whilst China absorbed eleven per cent. The residue was made up of varying percentages of trade with other European and Asiatic nations. The bulk of the export transactions with the United States were in Japanese tea, of which little was consumed in Britain or the Colonies.

A stout debate took place in the Lower House of the Diet on the promulgation of the Budget, for it was at once perceived that a substantial increase had been made in the apportionment for naval and military purposes. The Government delegates, however, successfully resisted all the attempts of the Opposition

to elicit a more definite statement than that certain measures of defence were in contemplation, and that it was necessary that the departments of State responsible should be in possession of funds to enable them to buy in the cheapest market.

Japan—though possessing a history dating back immeasurably beyond our own—was yet young as far as modern arts and sciences could count. An infant in power in comparison with the empire "on which the sun never sets," hers was at least a realm on which the sun rose day by day from the Pacific with infinite promise of a growing and glorious future. Her fleet had vindicated its claim to be regarded as constituting the most formidable force to be met with in the Far East, and if no alliance, offensive and defensive, was practicable between Japan and Britain, it was obvious that a good working understanding had arisen between the two nations, and that in her energy and enterprise Japan was rightfully esteemed as the rising counterpart, on the flank of Asia, of that

Power in the west of Europe to which, in her vigour, she was so often compared. The cordiality so long existent gained with every fresh indication of Great Britain's desire to foster, rather than check, the growing aspirations of a nation so wedded to progress as the Japanese. They made our institutions their models, and believed that their interests were all but identical with ours in the Far East. On the other hand, the policy of Russia had tended toward their perpetual embarrassment, and the fall of more than one Ministry might have been attributed to complications which had their rise in the indignation of the Japanese people at real or fancied injuries for which Russia had been directly responsible, or which she was considered to have in some degree instigated. From whatever standpoint they might have viewed it, the proximity of Korea to the west coast of Japan had made it impossible for any Tokio Government to have tamely submitted to a Russian occupation of the peninsula, and ample evidence had been

given of the intention of the Tsar to absorb the Korean monarch's territory on the first opportunity, in spite of the existence of the treaty under which joint protection was to be afforded by Korea's neighbours on the north and east.

It had been made abundantly plain to the Japanese that the longer they delayed a vigorous assertion of their rights in that region, the more difficult must it become for them to secure their foothold. Japan had to declare her objections there and then, or ever afterwards would have had to hold her peace.

The fact that Britain and America were virtually united on those grave questions which were agitating the Extreme Orient, was some assurance that any conflict would be limited strictly to a war between the Japanese and such forces as Russia could spare from Europe to bring against them. So long as America and Britain stood firmly together, there was the probability, almost amounting to a guarantee,

that Germany and France would be prevented from taking any active part in hostilities, and in that there was at least ground for hope that the field of action would be restricted to the farthest shores of Asia. Interference by the other European Powers could only have brought about a general war on the Continent. It was at no time impossible, of course, that this lamentable result would be brought about in any case, but still there was some basis for the belief that the contest would be confined to the region directly affected, and to the two nations which were immediately concerned with the future of Korea.

The part which Japan played at this critical period in the affairs of the Far East, was in great measure due to the composition of the Japanese navy, which latterly possessed characteristics tending to constitute it the most formidable fighting force then concentrated in any Eastern waters. It was in point of speed capable of the most rapid movement, for the

battle-ships or cruisers, armoured or protected, of which it was made up, possessed at least a speed of seventeen knots, when given a full supply of coal, and driven at their best. The *Yashima* and *Fuji*, sister ships, had each a displacement of 12,450 tons, with an indicated horse-power, under forced draught, of 14,000. Their armour was from fourteen inches to eighteen inches thick, and they carried two twelve-inch guns in each barbette, of which there were two in each ship. But in their lighter armament they were specially strong, for each had ten six-inch quick-firers and twenty-four quick-firing three-pounders, in addition to five torpedo tubes, four of which were under water. There were ten large cruisers, viz. the *Chiyoda*, *Naniwa*, *Yoshino*, *Akitsushima*, *Matsushima*, *Suma*, *Itsukushima*, *Hashidate*, *Idzumi*, and *Takachiho*—the slowest of which was set down as a seventeen-knots vessel, whilst the *Yoshino* steamed twenty-two, and the *Suma* not less than

twenty. The others varied from seventeen to nineteen knots, but it was a remarkable rate of steaming to contemplate as that at which a powerful fleet was able to carry its national flag wherever occasion might call for its presence in foreign seas. But more important than the ability to travel far and fast was the experience, altogether unique, which the officers and men had already had of fighting in modern warships. Among the cruisers named no fewer than eight fought at the battle of the Yalu, and helped to gain a victory there which had inspired all with the utmost confidence.

Japan was building, in various countries, or in her own yards, two more first-class battleships, of 15,140 tons displacement, and seventeen and a half knots speed; four new protected cruisers of 7,500 tons each, and twenty-one knots steaming power; three new cruisers of the *Yoshino* type, 4,870 tons displacement, and a speed of twenty-two and

a half knots; and two more of the *Akitsushima* type, 3,200 tons each, and twenty knots speed. As this last-named type was produced originally at Yokosuka, the new ships were likewise constructed there.

But it was in torpedo boats that Japan was particularly well able to arm herself, for she was turning out this class of vessel rapidly, and had no fewer than ninety-five in course of preparation in her own yards or on order in other countries. Every month additions were made to the list. And of torpedo gun vessels and destroyers she had sixteen, the new boats being capable of steaming at not less than thirty knots an hour.

Altogether the navy of Japan consisted of—

Battle-ships	6
Cruisers	32
Gunboats	24
Torpedo destroyers	16
Torpedo boats	152
	230

CONCLUSION

In the endeavour to provide an answer to the query—"What will Japan do?" it has been hoped that some justification exists for the assumption that we are as a nation directly interested in her progress in naval and military power. We cannot ignore the fact that her alliance would be of the utmost value to any nation which has ambitions to realize in the Far East, and strong as we are ourselves on the seas, there will at all times be satisfaction in the thought that this rising empire beyond India is at one with us in the main principles of our policy, and equally as determined as ourselves to promote the freedom of commercial intercourse. There is sympathy between Japan and Britain, independently of formal treaties, which it is highly probable will increase rather than diminish as time passes, for it is founded upon mutual respect for national prowess and a like indisposition

to submit to coercion in any form. If Japan does not become the avowed ally of this country, we at least should make sure that she does not join with any other in a league which may some day be detrimental to our prestige in Asia.

THE END

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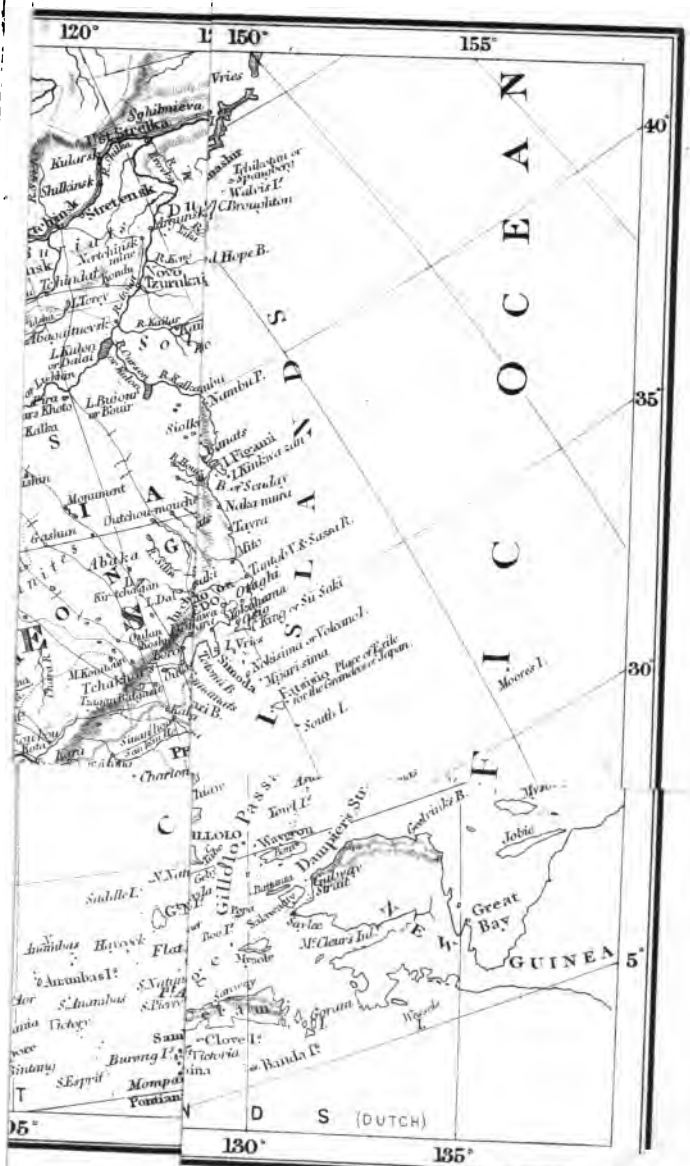
120°
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